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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

AN ANALYSIS OF THE DUC DE MAYENNE AS LEADER OF THE FRENCH CATHOLIC LEAGUE

1589-1593

by

© FREDRICK C. SPROULE

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "An Analysis of the Duc de Mayenne as Leader of the French Catholic League, 1589-1593", submitted by Fredrick C. Sproule in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

After the murder of the duc de Guise in December 1588 and the assassination of Henri III in the following August, the events leading up to the conversion of Henri de Navarre in July 1593 are often accepted as inevitable. The defeat of the Catholic League's forces, the divisions within the League and the gradual shift of support toward Navarre are viewed merely as obstacles temporarily blocking the inexorable advance of the future Henri IV to the throne. A great deal of study is devoted to the early period of the League -- the ascendancy of Guise -- but from 1589 to 1593 attention shifts to the rising fortunes of Navarre. The duc de Mayenne, the leader of the League in this period, is largely neglected as a nonentity whose only noteworthy achievement was being the opponent of 'Henri le Grand'.

This thesis examines the nature of Mayenne's role in the period between the death of Guise, his elder brother, and the conversion of Navarre. Beginning with background on the League under Guise, the changes in the organization of the movement and the role of the leader as a result of Guise's murder are discussed in Chapter I. Following this, the three most important problems faced by Mayenne -- factional rivalry, foreign relations and the search for subsidy, and the need to select a monarch -- are analysed from the standpoint of Mayenne's responses to these challenges. The thesis concludes with an assessment of Mayenne's aims, motives and actions, as illustrated by his conduct in his capacity as leader of the League.

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INTRODUCTION

Religious strife was the almost inevitable result of the spread of Calvinism in France. The Huguenots, as the French Calvinists came to be called, never constituted more than one fifth of the population of the kingdom, but they were an active minority, not content to lie back and hope for indulgence from the government as a reward for docile behavior. Instead, they were spurred on by the strength of their religious fervour to make new conquests for their faith. But this challenge of the Huguenots was met in full force by Catholics. The popular concept that Catholic religious belief was diminishing in the sixteenth century carries little validity in the case of France. The hierarchy may have been corrupted and in need of reform, but the faith of the vast majority was virtually unshaken, perhaps even strengthened, by the tumult of the Reformation.

Implicit in the dogma of both Catholics and Huguenots was the superiority of their beliefs, the error of all other faiths and the duty incumbent upon each religion to correct the others' errors, by force if necessary. Few were prepared to challenge the latter assumption, and fewer still would have conceived of disputing the first two. Sixteenth century religions still possessed the crusading ideal; toleration was an aberration, not the norm. Even the Politiques, considered by many modern historians to be the harbingers of the modern age when they appeared in the last quarter of the century, advocated only a temporary co-existence of the warring religions, until the

Huguenots could be convinced peacefully of the error of their ways.[1]

Throughout France the claim of each religion to represent true Christianity manifested itself in riots, violence and massacres between the adherents of the respective faiths. In 1562 these troubles escalated into full-scale war between the government of France, dominated by Catholics, and the Huguenot rebels. Twice more in the 1560's and several more times in the following decade wars erupted from the aspirations of the heretics to gain recognition and the determination of the Catholics to avoid any such calamity.

French Catholics looked to the king to take the lead in enforcing religious conformity. However, the weakness of the French monarchs during the religious wars made such an initiative impossible. Henri II's accidental death in 1559, under the lance of his Captain of the Guards, removed strong royal direction from the government for over thirty years. His successor, François II, a boy of fifteen, ruled barely a year before succumbing to a fatal abscess. His younger brother, not yet ten, succeeded him as Charles IX; then in 1574, when he was only twenty-three, the frail Charles died and was in his turn followed by another brother, Henri III. Great things were expected from this King; but the promise of his early years faded soon after he took his crown, as Henri lapsed into indecision and apathy. Catherine de Medici, the Queen Mother of the last three Valois kings, did her utmost to fill the void left by the general incompetence of her sons. For thirty years she presided over French affairs as the dominant political figure, attempting to maintain peace in the kingdom and her sons on the throne. But the government of the realm, unsupervised by any figure strong enough to pursue a consistent, independent policy, became the object of competition among the great magnates.

This political struggle was interwoven with the religious conflict. Early in the wars -- actually before they had fully begun -- each of the religions had acknowledged political and military leaders. By the energies of its members and the enormous circle of patronage at its disposal, the House of Guise-Lorraine, untainted by heresy, became the director of the Catholic cause. Its princes were, until the end of the religous wars, the strategists, organizers and main source of military and political support for the Catholics; at the Court, they consistently represented to the king the need for decisive action against the Huguenots. The rebels also found the well-born leadership necessary to co-ordinate any party in the early modern period; the ancient family of Bourbon became the spokesmen for the new religion and the leaders in its struggle for survival.

Because of their need for powerful protectors and leaders the Huguenots, who looked to the Bourbon family, and the Catholics, who looked to the Guises, were compelled to accept the particular political aspirations of their respective heads. The fortunes of Catholic France were as inextricably bound to the fortunes of the House of Guise as the fortunes of the Huguenots depended upon the success of the Bourbons. Both sought "to capture the existing machinery of state without subverting the political . . . structure of the country."[2] Religious ends could best be attained by political means. The Bourbons, for instance, originally struggled for control of the regency during the minority of Charles IX which, if achieved, would have immensely benefited the cause of the Huguenots. Similarly, when Henri de Navarre later sought to assert his right to the crown, this political goal became the mainstay of the Protestant platform. The political goals of the leaders of each party became inseparable from the religious goals of their followers. A personal victory or gain for one of the leaders was a bonus to the party which followed him. Thus, the French religious wars cannot be considered solely as the clash of two religions but rather as a quasi-dynastic struggle between the Bourbons, backed by the Huguenots and later a few Politiques, and the Guises, sustained by Catholic support.

As both Bourbon and Guise vied for a dominant infleunce over the kings and the government, the Queen Mother fought to maintain her sons' independence. To accomplish this she was often forced to associate with one of the contending factions, usually the Catholic, for the crown was so weakened that either could command more resources than could be mustered by the central government. However, she did not want to deliver the crown to complete dependency upon the Guises. For this reason she continually tried to conciliate the Huguenots and the Catholics and the crown and the Huguenots. Catherine's unwillingness to see either party altogether crushed or totally victorious is a partial explanation of why, when the Huguenots lost every major armed encounter against the Catholics, they gained greater privileges with each successive treaty. But the government had been so fragmented, obedience to royal edicts so diminished and the conviction of the Catholics against the Huguenots so deep-rooted that these unpopular treaties with the heretics were virtually unenforceable. The Huguenots seldom received all the concessions granted, as a result of the implacable hostility of the Catholics to compromises with the heretics. This in turn caused further eruptions. The inability of the crown to solve the problem of the Huguenots to the satisfaction of staunch Catholics finally, in 1576, gave rise to the League.

The French Catholic League, or Holy Union of Catholics, appeared in 1576 in response to the latest and most lenient treaty with the Huguenots. Always susceptible to the lure of the power denied him at Court, the duc d'Alençon, younger brother of Henri III, had joined forces with the Huguenots. This created an opposition so imposing that the king and the ever-present Queen Mother were compelled to grant terms which virtually called into existence a Huguenot state within the kingdom of France.

Catholic reaction to this treaty was immediate. The most contentious issue was the government's award of the province of Picardy to the prince de Condé, the brother and lieutenant of Henri de Bourbon, king of Navarre, the Huguenot leader. The governor of Péronne, the capital of Picardy, organized the Catholics of the province to resist the implementation of this clause. The League of Péronne appealed to all of Catholic France to take a stand against the heretics' encroachment upon the traditional religion of the kingdom. In order to "establish the law of God in its entirety" and "to maintain the service and obedience due king Henri III from his subjects," Catholics from every corner of France were exhorted to band together to oppose the pretensions of the Huguenots, "either by way of the laws or by force of arms." A chief "to whom all members will swear unquestioning obedience and service" would be selected to prosecute the struggle against any, "regardless of their position," who supported the heretics. Illustrative of the increasing intensity of emotions in the conflict was a provision which typified the stance of the League in subsequent years: the League refused to recognize neutrality. If a person gave any less than complete devotion to the League and the Catholic religion, then that person was an enemy.[3]

Within several months the League became a national organization, and Henri de Lorraine, duc de Guise, emerged as its spokesman and leader. He had been solicited by the original organizers to assume this position by virtue of his standing as the most powerful Catholic noble in France. "Their [the Leaguers'] resentment was supported by the duc de Guise, who was not hesitant to seize this occasion to satisfy his ambition and his intriguing genius."[4] Such was the organization and strength of this movement under its new leader that it was able to dominate completely the Estates-General called by Henri III to settle the problems raised by the terms given the Huguenots. League-inspired deputies made sweeping demands upon the king for the prosecution of the war against the heretics, yet left Henri impotent by refusing to grant the funds necessary for the campaign.

Henri complied with the demands of the estates by mounting a half-hearted attack on the Huguenots in 1577. Alençon was lured back to the Court with the promise of the duchy of Anjou; and a new peace, which repudiated the most objectionable articles of the previous agreement, was concluded with the Huguenots. Alarmed at the strength demonstrated by the League, Henri outlawed all associations or political groups among his subjects. Although the League had not accomplished its goal of the extirpation of heresy, it passed quietly into the background after the Estates-General of 1576-1577. The duc de

Guise was not prepared at that time to press the matter any further against the king's will. However, this first venture which achieved particular ends outside regular channels was not forgotten during the uneasy peace which lasted from 1577 to 1584.

The succession crisis brought about by the death of Henri III's youngest brother, the duc d'Anjou, formerly Alençon, in June 1584 provided the impetus for the reconstitution of the League. The rapid response to this potential crisis clearly shows that in the period since the dissolution of the League in 1577 the original structure and contacts formed by the League of Péronne had not been neglected. In 1584, however, when League leaders began planning for the expected conflict, the League's raison d'être was much more specific than it had been previously. Henri III had no sons, and the tradition-sanctioned rules of royal inheritance through male blood lines brought the title of heir présomptif to Henri de Navarre, the Huguenot leader. Devout Catholics were extremely disconcerted at the thought of a heretic wearing the crown of France. The duc de Guise assumed the initiative in organizing against any such eventuality; the maintenance of the crown in Catholic hands was and remained the primary function of the League.

Guise's first action was to commit himself and the movement to an alliance with Spain. By this move he indicated that he expected the impending struggle to be of greater intensity than the previous wars. On the last day of 1584 he concluded the treaty of Joinville with the agents of Philip II, the Spanish monarch. Philip promised to support the League in its attempt to quash the heretics and maintain the religious uniformity of the kingdom. Spanish money and troops were pledged to assist in this task, and Guise was to receive a monthly pension to meet his needs as organizer of the movement. In exchange, the League vowed to prevent any further French aid to the Dutch rebels and to second Philip's efforts against his rebellious subjects once the French conflict was resolved.

Further preparations were undertaken once Spanish support was assured. The feverish nature of the activity again suggests the expectation of a large-scale clash. Agents were dispatched to spread the message of the League to the provinces, troops were recruited and munitions were assembled. The diarist L'Estoile recorded that Henri III chose to remain blissfully ignorant of all this, and "did not want to believe what he could not see."[5] He was soon forced to take notice of the progress of the League. On 12 March 1585 a barge loaded with arms was discovered at Lagny, substantiating the rumours of the League's preparations.[6]

At the end of the month Guise issued the Declaration of Péronne, the first proclamation of the intent of the League. The Declaration protested against the pretensions of the Huguenots and declared their elimination the only goal of the League.[7] But the Declaration was also meant to publicize the solution to the succession problem which the League advocated. Charles, cardinal de Bourbon, the sixty-six year old uncle of Henri de Navarre, was proclaimed "first prince of the blood" by virtue of the heresy of his nephew. This kept the succession within the House of Bourbon but removed it from Navarre, whose religion -- the League claimed -- made him ineligible. Notoriously feeble-minded and susceptible to the manipulation of the duc de Guise, the old cardinal nonetheless was a good Catholic and became, in the minds of the Leaguers, the heir to Henri III.

Another group also caused Henri to take alarm at the growing restiveness and militancy. An organization later to be known as the Seize was rapidly gaining control of the city of Paris. This ultra-Catholic group was gradually infiltrating the militia and the municipal government, in spite of the intelligence Henri received from a spy in their midst.[8] The problem of the existence of this radical group became critical when, sometime in early 1585, they forged a loose alliance with the duc de Guise and pledged allegiance to the League. Every day the king received word of the defection of another town or official to the party of the League. Henri realized that the League and Guise were moving, despite their protestations of dedication to his person, completely out of his control.

Throughout the spring of 1585 the king issued orders prohibiting the acquisition of arms and the maintenance of a private army. The abolition of leagues and associations, made in 1577, was repeated. As king, Henri decreed, he alone was competent to deal with the heretics.[9] But it was no longer sufficient for Henri to promulgate an edict to pacify the country and restrain the passions of the Catholics. The League was powerful enough to defy his commands. In July 1585 Henri was forced, for lack of any alternative, to associate himself with the League. The Edict of July recognized the cardinal de Bourbon as the heir to the throne and annulled all previous concessions to the Huguenots, who were given three months to convert or leave the kingdom.[10] As well as the League's conquest of the king, this edict represented a declaration of war upon the heretics.

By mid-1585 the lines of the struggle which continued for three and one half years were clearly established. In the middle was Henri III, too weak to be able to follow an independent policy or to break with the League yet chafing at the power of his over-mighty ally. To one side of him, the League, represented by the duc de Guise, spoke for the Catholic conscience of France and the political ambitions of Guise and his followers. On the other side, the Huguenots, led by Henri de Navarre, wanted both political and religious concessions and adopted the attitude that the League was solely a plot by Guise to gain the government and even the throne for himself. Both factions protested their loyalty to Henri.

In the form it assumed after 1584 the League was basically an overpowering pressure group, determined to force its outlook upon the recalcitrant king and to make certain that he was not deterred from a proper line of conduct. The theoreticians of the League stressed the religious qualification which traditionally was necessary to sit on the throne of St. Louis as justification for the stance against Henri de Navarre and the heretics. They did not consider themselves revolutionary in any sense, for they simply wanted to uphold the traditional order of things. But though the motives of the League seemed selfless, the movement itself sought a composite of religious and political goals and of public and private interests.

At the apex of the organization stood the duc de Guise who, by virtue of his leadership of the party and his own vast circle of patronage, was the most powerful man in France. While never openly used in opposition to Henri III his power, existing parallel to that of the monarch, was an omnipresent and thinly-veiled threat of retaliation if the king faltered in his enforced resolution to root out the heretics. The duke ruled his party with an iron hand, restraining the ardour of the more zealous and encouraging or threatening, as the case required, those insufficiently supporting the cause. Despite his commanding position, it is unlikely that Guise's intent was ever to seize the throne. Rather, he seemed more concerned simply to install himself in the greatest position possible, for his personal gratification as much as for the advancement of his party. The more the duc de Guise gained, the freer the League would be in its prosecution of the war against the heretics. All his plans were aimed against the Huguenots or towards the candidacy of the cardinal de Bourbon; what Guise planned subsequent to the reign of the old and childless cardinal is unknown. Since no evidence indicates any personal designs upon the throne, it is most likely that Guise was simply building himself into a position in which his co-operation would be necessary to Henri III, the cardinal de Bourbon or any other future king. Meanwhile, Guise worked to increase his power over the king.

From 1585 to 1588 the League had attained the goal of most factions of the period; the monarch had been forced to associate himself with the party, recognize its leaders and endorse its goals. But the alliance was never an easy one. Its enforced nature was well-known, and the frequent clashes between Guise and the king emphasized Henri's basic opposition to the existence of the League. The king, however, never took the step of openly breaking with the League and allying with Navarre. Repugnant as the existence of this power in his state and the aspirations of Guise may have been to Henri, the League nonetheless represented undeniable religious orthodoxy. The party of Navarre, despite the rights of its leader, was still the most blatantly divisive force in the kingdom, one condemned by Rome and despised and feared by the majority of the French.

In opposition to these pretensions, the League was actually in control of much of France and, through Guise, dominated the Court. Pro-League garrisons and civic governments refused royal officials entry into many towns, while Guise supervised the preparations Henri III made for the war against the heretics. However, the king sought to escape the restrictions imposed upon him by the League, and as a result of this passive resistance Guise could never be certain of receiving his support unless he were present to extract grudging consent. But the League continued to flourish, despite Henri's obvious disapproval of the movement, and exercised an increasing control over Paris and the key communes throughout the kingdom.

In the campaign of 1587 Henri attempted to thwart his unfriendly ally by allowing Guise only a limited number of troops to stop a large body of German reîtres from entering France and combining with Navarre. At the same time he gave a great army to the duc de Joyeuse, one of the circle of his personal favorites at Court, called the mignons, to lead against Navarre in southern France. He himself chose to remain on the Loire with a substantial force, a force which many later pointed out could better have been utilized by the outnumbered Guise. The surprising results of the campaign destroyed Henri's bid to humiliate Guise. Navarre's forces completely overwhelmed Joyeuse at Courtras, while Guise harried the reîtres with several carefully-planned ambushes, eventually forcing them to leave France. This victory only enhanced the duke's popularity, while the defeat of Henri's forces and his own inaction during the campaign gave rise to rumours that he was negotiating with Navarre.

Henri III's attempt to increase his own prestige at the expense of the League had failed. However, Guise recognized the necessity of associating Henri more closely with the movement. Meetings of the members of the Guise family were held early in 1588 in Nancy to discuss the League's relations with Henri III and to determine the means of removing the mignons, many of whom were hostile to the League, from influence over the king.[11] Disregarding the king's frequent commands not to return to the capital city, Guise entered Paris, by then fully mobilized under the Seize as the centre of League support, on 9 May to a popular reception markedly in contrast to those received by the king. Unconvinced by Guise's excuses for coming to Paris -- he claimed to have come to answer the charges made against him by his enemies -- Henri ordered 4,000 troops into Paris to increase security in the capital. By this move he precipitated the popular revolt of 12-13 May, the Days of the Barricades. The king fled Paris through an unguarded gate, leaving Guise and the League in control of the capital.

However much Henri may have wished to, he did not have the personality or the resources to formulate and follow a policy independent of the League. Nor was he, in mid-1588, driven to the extreme of alliance with Navarre. On 21 July 1588 the king admitted his helplessness by signing the Edict of Union with the League. Once again he was officially bound to this organization.

The strength of the League had outgrown its limited objectives. This became apparent in the Estates-General which convened at Blois in October 1588, which again was composed entirely of pro-League deputies. By this time the League was so strong that it manipulated the king freely, where previously it had only exerted pressure. Time and again Henri was forced to humiliate himself before the assembly by taking repeated oaths to support the League, to the extent that he was forced to incorporate the Edict of Union into the French constitutional structure as a fundamental law. The League was pushing so far that Henri III's continued tolerance of the movement was made impossible. The final spark to this resentment was ignited when the duke of Savoy invaded the marquisate of Saluzzo, a French territory. Henri immediately assumed the duc de Guise's complicity in this opportunistic seizure. Sometime in early December 1588 Henri resolved to assert his power by murdering Guise. On 23 December, while awaiting an audience with the king, Guise was assassinated in the antechamber of the king's apartments by the monarch's private guard. The following day Guise's brother, Louis, cardinal de Guise, met a similar fate. Other organizers were imprisoned, including the cardinal de Bourbon and the leaders of the Paris delegation to the estates.

The assassinations and arrests at Blois on 23 and 24 December 1588 constituted the delayed reaction of the king to the increasingly onerous restrictions imposed upon him by the League since the revolt of Paris the preceeding May. Hesitant, yet for once determined, he took these drastic steps; and later, in April 1589, he formed an alliance with Henri de Navarre. By these actions he did not reestablish his authority as he had hoped, but he did totally transform the character of the struggles in France. Moreover, as the League recovered from the king's sudden blow, Henri III found that he had paved the way for the rise of the duc de Mayenne as a replacement for his murdered brother, the duc de Guise.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

[1] The aims of the *Politiques* are discussed in Edmund M. Beame, "The Development of Politique Thought during the French Religious Wars" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1957).

[2] H.G. Koenigsberger, "The Organization of Revolutionary Parties in France and the Netherlands during the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of Modern History*, XXVII (1955), 350.

[3] The articles of the League of Péronne are in Pierre-Victor Palma Cayet, *Chronologie Novenaire, contenant l'histoire de la guerre et les choses les plus mémorables advenues sous le règne de Henri IV (1589-1598)*, 13-14. This history and many other primary sources for this thesis are found in Michaud and Poujoulat, eds., *Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1854); hereafter cited as Michaud and Poujoulat. The *Chronologie Novenaire* is in vol. XII of the collection.

[4] Simon Goulart, ed., *Mémoires de la Ligue, contenant les évenements les plus remarquables depuis 1576, jusqu'à la Paix accordée entre le Roi de France et le Roi d'Espagne, en 1598* (Amsterdam, 1758), I, v.

[5] Pierre de L'Estoile, *Registre-Journal de Henri III, Roy de France et de Polongne, 1574-1589*, vol. XIV of Michaud and Poujoulat, 182.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] "Declaration des causes qui ont mû monseigneur le cardinal de Bourbon et les pairs . . . de s'opposer à ceux qui par tous moyens s'efforcent de subvertir la religion catholique et l'état," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, I, 56-63.

[8] This spy was Nicolas Poulain. See his account of the *Seize* from 1585 to the Days of the Barricades in 1588 in L'Estoile, 320-332; and M. Cimber and F. Danjou, eds., *Archives Curieuses de l'Histoire de France depuis Louis XI jusqu'à Louis XVIII*, series 1 (Paris, 1836), XI, 290-325.

[9] These edicts are in *Mémoires de la Ligue*, I, 54-56 and 63-73.

[10] "Édit du roy sur la réunion de ses sujets a l'Eglise catholique, apostolique et romaine," *ibid*., 178-182.

[11] The meeting at Nancy is discussed in Palma Cayet, 42.

CHAPTER ONE

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE LEAGUE AND THE ROLE OF MAYENNE

War had always played an integral part in the lives of the French nobility. The conception of the Second Estate -- the *noblesse d'épée* at any rate -- as a military caste was still prevalent, and in some respects merited, in the sixteenth century. But the political and military turmoil of the Wars of Religion caused a generation of the French nobility to be raised bearing arms, not against a foreign enemy or in localized disputes of a largely private nature, but in concerted campaigns against their countrymen. The common nationality of the combatants was an almost negligible factor in restraining the determined prosecution of the struggle by both sides, for any attitudes and customs held in common were superseded by differing religious persuasions and political ends. Charles de Lorraine, marquis and later duc de Mayenne, was of this generation. Born in 1554, he was the grandson of Louis de Guise, the first of the cadet branch of the House of Lorraine. Louis sought and won fantastic fortunes in the service of the French king. Charles' father, François "*le Balafré*," duc de Guise, was the most eminent and successful of an ingenious family while Mayenne's elder brother, who inherited his father's duchy,[1] also possessed many of his abilities. Mayenne himself served his apprenticeship for the struggles to come in campaigns against the Turk, which included participation in the battle of Lepanto, as well as in battles against the Huguenots in the 1560's. In 1573 the marquisate of Mayenne was elevated to a duchy -- the fourth such promotion received by the Guises from the kings of France -- and Charles, now duc de Mayenne, was awarded the governorship of Burgundy, one of the kingdom's most lucrative posts. In the following years he divided his time between the administration of this province[2] and the continuation of the war against the Huguenots, often as commander of an independent force.

But in spite of Mayenne's position as one of the senior members of the House of Guise, he played only a limited and strictly secondary role in the League during the leadership of his brother, the duc de Guise. Short and prone to a stoutness which developed into extreme obesity before middle age, Mayenne was physically incapable of attracting the popularity enjoyed by Guise. As well, the elder brother proved far more adept at intrigue than the ponderous and indecisive Mayenne. Although he was given the command of the royal army in Guyenne for the campaign of 1586[3] and accompanied Guise in repelling the incursion of the reitres hired by Henri de Navarre in the following autumn, Mayenne was usually relegated to the background as Guise forged ahead with the furtherance of his ambitions and the cause of the League. A certain amount of Mayenne's resentment of his brother became evident when the two quarrelled over a courtisane and actually drew swords against each other.[4] Mayenne withdrew to Burgundy after this incident and for the most part remained there, with little involvement in the crucial events of 1588.

He was in Lyon, organizing a force against Savoy, when the courier dispatched from Paris informed him that his eldest and youngest brothers, the duc and cardinal de Guise, had fallen victim to royal murder. Along with this news came the intelligence that Alphonse d'Ornano, commissioned to effect his arrest, rapidly was approaching Lyon.[5] Mayenne quickly left the city on 25 December, returning to the safety of Burgundy by a circuitous route to avoid the royal agents he feared to be in pursuit. For a fortnight after this precipitate departure, even the core-members of the League at Paris remained unsure of Mayenne's whereabouts.[6] He seemed to have vanished and conflicting rumours of his activities were rampant. But probably by the time that he reached the borders of Burgundy, and certainly before his entry into Dijon on 5 January 1589, Mayenne had decided to assume leadership of the party and began preparations for the ride to Paris to receive recognition. Prior to setting out, he spent two weeks in Dijon, making the requisite military levies for the journey and also arranging the administration of Burgundy in anticipation of a lengthy absence.[7] Maintenance of his authority in Burgundy would continue to be an essential element in the politics of Mayenne in the following years, for the province represented the basis of both his political power and personal support. But by 18 January, with his government apparently well secured and after notification to all concerned of his intention to take the leadership,[8] Mayenne left Dijon for Paris.

In the years since its revival in 1584 the League had become so accustomed to the eldest capable male of the House of Guise acting as leader that no challenge was presented to the general consent that Mayenne should succeed his brother. Even the son of the murdered leader, who became duc de Guise, was not considered because of his youth -- he was eighteen -- and his arrest by Henri III on 24 December 1588 and his subsequent imprisonment. There did exist other possible successors among the princes of the House of Guise. The ducs de Nemours, Aumâle, Lorraine, Mercoeur and Elboeuf -- often called the Princes of the League by contemporaries -- were all of high enough rank to have merited consideration for the honour if it had been open to other candidates, but for several years, despite his limited involvement, Mayenne had been tacitly recognized as second-in-command. In the spring of 1587 the *Seize*, after Guise's refusal to sanction a planned *coup* in Paris, had turned to Mayenne for his approval. The plot proved to be abortive and both the Seize and Mayenne were reprimanded by Guise,[9] but the appeal to Mayenne indicates a general recognition of his superiority in status to the other League princes.

This was further illustrated throughout 1588 and the early part of the following year. Danger to Guise increased as he and events pressured Henri III into a corner from which retaliation was widely expected. The Spanish ambassador informed Philip II in October of 1588 that several prominent Catholics of Paris had assured him that "if the King takes extreme measures against Mucius [Guise], they would immediately call upon Jacoba d'Arbelays [Mayenne]."[10] Mendoza's correspondence in the month following the murders at Blois shows that his main concern was Mayenne, and the terms in which he wrote of him suggests the presumption of a nearly automatic succession from one brother to the next in the absence of an available direct heir to Guise's position. Nor did the remaining princes of Guise offer any impediments to Mayenne's succession after the murders occurred; none indicated their candidacy for the position left vacant by Guise. The duc d'Aumâle, Mayenne's cousin, was invested as governor of Paris by the *Seize*, but this move was a necessary one, for a high ranking protector was essential to act as spokesman and representative of the League. However, for overall leadership, in spite of Aumâle's availability, the Seize looked to Mayenne. "Apart from God, we put our hopes more on you than on anyone," wrote the Bureau de la Ville to Mayenne urging him to come to Paris as soon as possible.[11] A letter to Étampes signed simply "the Catholics of Paris" stated "we are staying on the defensive until the arrival of the duc de Mayenne."[12] Thus assured of at least formal, if not whole-hearted, support from the vast majority of the League, Mayenne finally arrived in Paris on 12 February 1589 to assume the leadership.

However, the deaths of the duc and cardinal de Guise had crystallized the many transformation which had occurred, primarily in 1588, within the League. The assassinations had radically altered the pattern of political rivalry existing between the monarch and the League to one of total enmity. The lines of the dispute were now drawn much more clearly and new attitudes, problems and goals emerged. Mayenne became the leader of a League demonstrably different in spirit from that which had arisen under the duc de Guise.

This new temper of the League became readily apparent in the months following Henri III's long-awaited revenge. Not well disposed toward Henri III at the best of times, no sooner was word received in Paris of the events in Blois than the prédicateurs began defaming the king from their pulpits.[13] The preachers of Paris traditionally exercized over their parishioners great powers of persuasion, never greater perhaps than during the later years of the League. Spurred on by the exhortations of these preachers, popular fury was directed at the treacherous monarch. 'Henri de Valois' was immediately declared unworthy of his office and became the object of numerous disparaging attacks.[14] There appeared an anagram of the king's name, '*vilain Herodes*,' probably one of the more polite labels affixed to his name in this time. Theoretical justification for revolt kept pace with this popular indignation. Jean Boucher, *curé* of St. Benoit and one of the most zealous of the Parisian *prédicateurs*, argued in the *De Justa Abdicatione* that by virtue of the assassination of the cardinal de Guise Henri III merited automatic excommunication, a sentence which needed only official endorsement by the pope.[15] Boucher further contended that the personal and public crimes of Henri de Valois were sufficient grounds in themselves for his deposition as a tyrant. This theme of justifiable deposition or even murder of a tyrant had been an element in French political thinking since the days of Jean Gerson almost two centuries earlier, and it was not long in coming to the surface in the crisis of 1589. These ideas were accorded a degree of official, or at least theoretical, sanction by a decree of the Sorbonne on 7 January 1589. In answer to queries from an unidentified group of Paris citizens, the Faculty of Theology responded that the people of France were absolved of their allegiance to Henri III and could legitimately bear arms against their former sovereign, "since he has violated public faith to the detriment of the Catholic Religion, the Edict of Union and the natural liberty of the meeting of the three Estates of this Kingdom."[16]

Perhaps regretting the alienation of a great many of his subjects by his decisive blow against the League, although probably not repenting the murders themselves, Henri published a conciliatory edict in early January of 1589.[17] He defended his actions on grounds of adherence to the Edict of Union which he reaffirmed as a fundamental law of the kingdom, as he had sworn before the estates at Blois. He extended pardon to all on the condition of withdrawal from all leagues and associations and the renewal of obedience to the monarch alone. However, the League, particularly the ultra-Catholic faction in power in Paris, no longer was bound by the strictures imposed on its existence in the previous years. It was no longer necessary to maintain an armed truce with Henri while he and Guise vied for the military and political control of the kingdom. He was not to be obeyed even grudgingly for, by 1589, the king no longer constituted a mere obstacle or impediment but had become the main enemy. Scores of pamphlets circulated in Paris, damning Henri as a heretic, murderer, sorcerer, corrupter of the kingdom and, explicit in all of these accusations, a tyrant.[18] Vengeance now took precedence over reconciliation; when Henri died at the hands of Jacques Clement on 2 August 1589 most Leaguers were elated, and the holiness of the assassin's mission was proclaimed.

Predominantly religious in its earlier publicized aims, though often forced to proceed through political channels, the League in 1589 added very definite political and constitutional goals as primary objectives. With little dissension from within the League, Henri III was considered removed from his office; his assassination only served to lend credence to the League's claim of the throne's vacancy since the designated successor of the last Valois king was the notorious Huguenot Henri de Navarre. The essential problem for the League was to find a new monarch. Although much has been made of the democratic tendencies within the League, particularly among the zealots of Paris, there is little evidence that any more than an unimportant scattering of Leaguers advocated any form of government other than a monarchy.[19] Such restrictions as they suggested be placed upon the sovereign's power were not democratic so much as they were traditional.

Particularly in the period between the murder of the Guises and the assassination of Henri III, when no official declaration was made regarding the future of the 'vacant' throne and those supporting the League in effect lived without a crowned monarch, the League has often been labelled a revolutionary party. But the League claimed that its role was primarily defensive. It argued that it was acting in defence of the people and traditions of France against the tyrant Henri III, and later Henri IV, who were rejected on constitutional as well as religious grounds. The League looked back to the days of harmony between monarch and subject which supposedly had existed in the Middle Ages, when kings took advice from and were granted money by the Estates-General, when the Parlement was a constitutional and legal advisory board to the ruler and when the king would take no important action without first consulting some or all of the magistrates of the kingdom. These time-honoured traditions, though most of them were apocryphal, were declared the essence of the true French monarchy and government. The League considered vigorous action necessary to halt the kings' encroachment upon the subjects' powers of resistance and to prevent further tyrannization by virtually unrestricted monarchs.[20]

No serious consideration was given to anything but a monarchy, one based upon the existing framework but incorporating the full restrictive powers of the Estates-General, the Parlement and the King's Council. The very nature of the accession of the League's anticipated king -- by election -- suggests a check placed upon his prerogatives from the outset. The pliable cardinal de Bourbon, languishing in comfortable confinement at the castle of Amboise, remained the designated successor to Henri III.[21] A prisoner since the murder of the Guises, he had little contact with his 'subjects'. Mayenne, as an officer of this king, frequently enjoined his followers to recognize 'Charles X' but the Leaguer king never received official election to his office; nor was he ever crowned. His political importance remained negligible, aside from the League's use of his name when convenient. The cardinal's advanced age precluded a definitive solution to the future succession, a problem which was never successfully solved by the League in the ensuing four years.

With the new political orientation came a corresponding development in organization. The League developed its own institutions or absorbed royal bodies to create a structure which claimed to act as a government for a great deal of France. The process began in Paris, where the League and its administration was always strongest, immediately after the murders of Blois. Never more than reluctantly obedient to Henri III, the city rose in revolt, led by the most radical wing of the League, the Seize.

The presence of this group in the background of League affairs in Paris is constantly alluded to in contemporary sources, but its actual composition is largely a matter of conjecture. Most contemporary memoirs and histories refer to the Seize when discussing virtually any act or attitude of the radical Catholics in Paris. There did exist a group which met regularly with representatives from the sixteen arrondissements of the city, from which the name originated, but to envisage a tightly-knit body of sixteen people directing affairs is fallacious.[22] A core of about twenty individuals, most of whose names are known, constituted the most influential direction of the Paris League and may therefore be considered as the Seize, but there were several score of other prominent Parisians also involved to a greater or lesser extent who frequently were alluded to as members of the Seize. Extremely fluid in terms of membership and numbers, the Seize nonetheless presented a relatively united front in its ultra-Catholic ideology and policy. It relied on a vast network of informers and supporters in the quartiers and the militia and on the prestige of the prédicateurs, many of whom were actual 'members' of the Seize, to influence the government of Paris and the course of the League. In addition, the key members of the Seize often held seats on one or more of the governing bodies through which the League operated, such as the Bureau de la Ville or the Conseil Général. In this manner they exercised a much more direct influence on the conduct of the League's business and policy.

The Seize armed their supporters in Paris "without awaiting any command"[23] and secured the capital within several days of the first news of the murders of Blois. The first step was to gain control of the key points of Paris. The militia, under control of officers appointed by or in collaboration with the Seize, was mobilized and suspected royal sympathizers were closely watched.[24] On Christmas Day a meeting of the notables of the city was held at the Hôtel de Ville. Dominated by the Seize, it decided to elect the duc d'Aumâle governor of Paris and to create a Council of the League. The only protest against these proposals emanated from several members of the Parlement, but these were summarily overruled.[25]

Aumâle, as governor of Paris, commanded the city's militia and was in charge of all military considerations. Traditionally a position granted by the king, the unauthorized elevation of Aumâle to the rank of governor by a self-organized, extra-constitutional body is indicative of the clearly rebellious stance assumed by the new rulers of Paris. He had been chosen for the task by his name and his availability and also for his youth and inexperience. The *Seize* dominated Paris and planned to continue to do so; Aumâle and the governors succeeding him may have led the military efforts of the capital, but the militia followed only through the orders of the *Seize*. Civil authority was pre-eminent in Parisian affairs.

The actual division of power within Paris throughout the period of Mayenne's tenure as leader remains ambiguous. The traditional administrative body of the city, the *Bureau de la Ville*, continued to function as the primary and most conspicuous official governing authority in Paris. As in the past, it was composed of the *prévôt des marchands*, four *échevins*, representatives from the sixteen *arrondissements*, and a fluctuating number of prominent citizens. In theory, the *Bureau* of the period of the League remained in control of the business of running the capital. The positions of *prévôt* and *échevins*, as well as a majority of the seats in the *Bureau*, were usually held by *Seize* members or sympathizers, but occasionally the *Bureau* did turn against the measures of the *Seize*, particularly following Mayenne's partial destruction of that radical group late in 1591. The Council of Forty that was elected following the meeting at the Hôtel de Ville on 25 December 1588 was more patently an extension of the *Seize*. The election of the Council was conducted under the supervision of the

Seize and its membership was in sympathy with or actually part of the Seize movement.[26] However, the authority it exercised in Paris vis-à-vis the Bureau de la Ville is unclear. While purporting to be an advisory board to the duc d'Aumâle and an organ of the League at large in communication with the other towns of League persuasion, the Council also interfered in strictly Parisian concerns, matters normally under the jurisdiction of the Bureau. Mayenne increased the Council's membership to fifty-four on 16 February 1589 and gave it official recognition as the Conseil Général de l'Union. For the next ten months this was the governing body of the Catholic League until its abolition in December of the same year by Mayenne. Ostensibly it worked in close conjunction with the leader, propagandizing League platforms, co-ordinating the national efforts for the cause and acting as the chief administrative body for the parts of the kingdom controlled by the League. In fact, however, it remained under the control of the Seize and continued the Council of Forty's preponderant influence in the government of Paris. It soon evolved into a closed, partisan committee for the furtherance of the particularist and divisive interests of the Seize within the League.

The Seize assured themselves of other existing institutions as well as the Bureau de la Ville. Many of the Seize were former government officials[27] and recognized the need to attract or control the institutions and personnel of the royal government. This was necessary not only to lend some degree of credence to the claims of the rebellious group but also to preserve it from any counterattack by older vested interests.

The intimidation and purge of the Parlement of Paris illustrates this seizure of power. The *Parlement* was an integral part of the constitutional and legal structure of France, potentially a powerful ally to be employed in furthering the League cause or a dangerous enemy if in opposition. Many of the magistrates had already demonstrated blatant hostility to the goals and methods of the League in general and the *Seize* in particular. The blow against the *Parlement* occurred on 16 January 1589.[28] Though desiring the court's registration of certain fiscal edicts, the *Seize* feared that the large moderate group within the *Parlement* would accept the offer of pardon extended by Henri III in January.[29] An armed delegation from the *Seize* appeared in the *Palais de Justice*, the seat of the *Parlement*, early in the morning of 16 January. Bussy Le Clerc, the leader of the troop, demanded that the Court decree in favour of the ruling of the Sorbonne against the tyrant Henri de Valois to prove their solidarity with the cause. Several attempts had been made in the preceeding week to intimidate the judges into support, but all had failed. Now, armed with the consent of Aumâle, Bussy summarily arrested twenty-two of the *parlémentaires* and removed them to the Bastille, where some were to remain for a year.

The purge produced the desired effects, for the remaining judges, some through fear and others through genuine support, acceded to the wishes of the League. On 26 January the members of the *Parlement* took an oath confirming their attachment to the Catholic religion and the cause of the League, swearing to "resist with all our power those who have violated the public faith and broken the Edict of Union . . . by the massacres committed in the town of Blois on 23 and 24 December . . . ."[30] The *Parlement* was now under the control of, or at least nominally in agreement with the *Seize*. In the following years the

Parlement continued in its commitment to the League.

On the same day as the purge of the Parlement, another group, using similar strongarm tactics, had assured the Seize of control of the Chambre des Comptes.[31] All of the apparatus of government and administration in Paris thus fell under the control of the League. New formulae were employed to endorse official documents. Rather than the traditional preamble of "Henri, par la grace de Dieu . . .," the arbiters of the respective institutions simply dropped the royal pretence and began with "les gens tenant . . .," indicative of the provisional nature of the League government. However, control of the institutions did not necessarily mean control of their personnel. Beginning in early 1589, many parlémentaires left the capital and went to Tours, where Henri III had ordered the loyal members of the Parlement and Chambre des Comptes to sit in view of the disloyalty of the capital.[32] Other magistrates, afraid of being compromised by supporting either side, simply withdrew from public life for the duration of the conflict. The result of this split of the institutions was that both the royal Parlement at Tours and particularly the League Parlement in Paris remained small. Only eighty magistrates took the oath of 26 January in Paris, a drastic change from the court's normal membership of approximately 250. At times in the critical year of 1591 the number of judges attending sessions in Paris fell below fifty.[33] Ineffectual as paper tigers, the rival Parlements spent much of their time denying each other's legality and issuing countless arrêts to annul each others decisions.

Although Paris was and would remain the stronghold of the cause, the pivot around which League affairs turned, support for the organization was also widespread in the provinces. The murders ordered by Henri III here also proved the stimulus for defection to the League. Each city or town followed a different course in the abjuration of its royal allegiance. In Picardy, for example, the town governors sympathetic to the League quickly assured themselves of the major towns and fortresses,[34] while in Lyon and Toulouse it was the civic authorities who were responsible for the acceptance of the League, a move which resulted in several days of bloodshed in the latter city.[35] Towns close to Paris often received proselytizing visits from the capital, either from prominent members of the _Seize_ or from one of the _prédicateurs_.[36] The rulers of Paris dispatched numerous letters to towns across France, exhorting them to join the cause and arguing "necessity forces us to help one another, for our own safety."[37] A precaution stressed to every town was the closure of the gates to any garrison of the other party; ". . . maintain your city in the Union of Catholics with your own forces; otherwise your destruction is certain."[38] But whether the impulse behind the revolt came from internal or external sources, large numbers of cities declared against Henri III, and later Henri IV, creating an extensive network of urban Leagues throughout France by the summer of 1589.

Equally varied were the League institutions established outside of Paris. In Dijon and Lyon bodies modelled upon the _Conseil Général de l'Union_ of Paris, with equally nebulous powers, were brought into existence. The _Conseil d'État de la Sainte-Union_ of Dijon, founded by Mayenne in January 1589, was a unique institution, apparently designed to direct the efforts of the League in Burgundy and to govern Dijon. However, the sympathies of the majority of Burgundians did not lie with the League. In the long absence of Mayenne the Conseil of Dijon was forced to concern itself more with the maintenance than extension of its power. At one point it arrested the lieutenant-governor appointed by Mayenne for scheming with the Burgundian royalists, who had set up their own government. Shortly after the death of Henri III the zealots of Dijon convoked the provincial estates, although the handful of representatives that appeared forced a postponement.[39] In Lyon the governing body arising from the revolt was called the Couseil de l'Union. Its powers were ostensibly confined to advising the duc de Nemours, the League governor of the Lyonnais, but in practice it negotiated with other towns in the province, dealt with a wide range of civil and military matters and acted as arbiter of the city of Lyon. With the support of the Archbishop of Lyon the Conseil often worked in direct opposition to the unpopular Nemours; and in 1593 it led a revolt against his rather extensive pretensions.[40]

In the majority of the towns siding with the League, however, the old municipal bodies remained intact. The traditional names and methods, and usually a substantial proportion of the Council membership previous to the revolt, changed little in 1589. The only real change made was the replacement of whichever councillors refused to cooperate with the League -- a process which became quite hazardous and violent if these councillors enjoyed popular support. However, the collapse of centralized control gave to many towns an almost complete political and even fiscal autonomy. In League-dominated France there was little supervision over the towns' actions; they were as free to seize tax monies and the royal mints[41] as to exercise uninterrupted control of the town. Following the example set by Paris, provincial Leaguers took measures to get the support or at least control of local administrative institutions and personnel. In areas where the League was preponderant, such officials either positively committed themselves or were replaced by reliable agents. Similarly, the provincial parlements were the objects of League attentions. In some areas a battle of coercion was waged between the towns and the magistrates, duplicating that of Paris. Mayenne himself went to Rouen in February 1589 and forcibly compelled the judges to submit to his authority.[42] Elsewhere, for example in Toulouse and Bordeaux, the parlémentaires willingly became supporters of the League.[43]

One of the serious weaknesses of the Union proved to be the failure to create a coherent national organization from fairly extensive, but disunited regional support. Attempts were made, particularly in the first year of Mayenne's leadership, to make the Conseil Général in Paris truly representative of the national League. In April 1589 the Sorbonne requested that Mayenne summon two or three representatives from each province to attend the Conseil Général, "to maintain our unity, to keep in communication with the cities and to receive the support that they will bring."[44] Previous to this request, the Conseil Général had written to the Conseil de l'Union in Lyon, inviting one member from each of the three estates to come to the capital and sit on the Conseil Général.[45] That the Sorbonne found it necessary to make application in the matter to Mayenne, and the absence of evidence of provincial deputies actually going to Paris suggests a minimal response to these proposals.[46] Nevertheless, there was a feeling of solidarity among many of the League towns. The oath sworn by the Conseil of Beauvais demanded that its members "swear along with

Messieurs of Paris, Orleans, Amiens and other Catholic towns . . . to aid each other as allies, sparing neither life nor property. . ." in the pursuit of a proper king.[47] Yet these grandiose promises came to mean very little. With the widespread military activity of the royalists becoming more successful each year, each province and city looked increasingly to its own safety rather than to the cause of the League at large.

The letter of the Conseil Général to Lyon also illustrates another of the major stumbling-blocks to League activity for which an adequate solution was not provided: the League was perpetually short of funds. Although the League had assumed much of the financial apparatus of the government, both in Paris and in the provinces, a great deal of the money raised tended to be absorbed by local interests. The dominant military and political force of a region simply appropriated the regular proceeds from the collection of the taille and other royal taxes. For this reason, the Conseil Général dispatched a letter to League supporters in the provinces, cautioning the officials to make certain that taxes collected in their territory were forwarded to a receiver who could be trusted to send them to Paris.[48] Funds garnered in this way were apparently not deemed sufficient, for Mayenne called for a special tax to be raised. "It seems," wrote the Conseil Général to the Conseil of Lyon, "that in proportion to Paris, which is offering 100,000 écus, you should be able to collect the sum of 20,000 écus from your province."[49] This money was earmarked directly for the use of Mayenne and his army, although it is unknown what became of the money raised, if any, in this instance.

Aside from regular taxation, irregular methods, ranging from extra taxes to extortion and confiscation, were employed to finance League operations. The profits from the farm of the taxes in the Ile de France were seized by the receveur of Paris; the previous tax-farmer, a certain René Brouart, had been unfortunate enough to have powerful enemies among the Seize.[50] Wherever the League faction were preponderant, its enemies, the Politiques and royalists, were subjected to arbitrary levies and frequently had their goods appropriated. Parisians in particular were required to contribute large sums for the cause. Pierre de L'Estoile, always prepared to record the exactions of the League, noted that on 8 January 1589 the second levy upon the bourgeois of the capital within a week was declared "for the defence of the city and other costs of war." Unpopular "even among the sincerest Catholics," the assessement was not to be the last. The Seize employed the expense of the war as an excuse "to come often to empty their purses."[51] In the following years every expedient and artifice was used to meet the ever-increasing demands of the League's war effort and administration. An anonymous pamphlet of 1593 described the methods of the League, particularly that of Paris, in raising money. Written by a former member of the League, it details the extortionate tactics employed against those who opposed or were suspected of opposing the League. Depending upon loyalty or bribes, a position of security from financial impositions could be attained, but economic and political ruin was the ultimate fate of dissenters.[52]

In 1588, shortly after the Edict of Union of July, the duc de Guise had received a letter advising him of the most effective means to gain his ends and those of the League.[53] Written by Pierre d'Epinac, the Archbishop of Lyon, the letter warrants examination, partly because Guise actually followed, or at least acted in a manner consonant with the instructions, but mainly because it is illustrative of the position of the leader of the League before Mayenne's assumption of this title. The first and major piece of advice to Guise was to "install yourself at Court, since it will then be easy to obtain good posts for your followers and to handle affairs for the advancement of the state and your own interests."[54] In most explicit terms the archbishop urged Guise to obtain the king's support through a combination of intimidation and loyal deeds. As well, the adherence of the courtiers was to be gained and held by a calculated mixture of fear tempered with respect. Machiavellian in his forthrightness, the prelate developed this point, stipulating which of these courtiers it was essential to cultivate and the manner in which this could best be pursued in each instance. But Guise's overriding aim would have to be not favour with the king and Court, which are only the means, but a position, a post which would reinforce his tenuous grasp on power and make him virtually unassailable. Commenting on his appointment to the rank of lieutenant-general on 4 August 1588, the archbishop counselled Guise that "whatever post they give you, do not let it restrict you within its bounds but increase it to be furthest extent of your power and favour."[55] The prelate concluded by citing the example of Charles Martel, who greatly exceeded the bounds of his jurisdiction as Mayor of the Palace to the point of being the de facto monarch. The position sought by Guise, that of Constable, would be his soon enough if he simply began to usurp its functions and prerogatives. Legal recognition necessarily would follow.

The "Instructions à Monsieur de Guise," remarkably blunt and unequivocal in an era of subtle and dissimulating correspondence, elucidated the position of the duc de Guise in the final months of his ascendancy and charted a course to be followed in the realization of his projects. However, the changes in the League wrought by his murder immediately dated the "Instructions." The position of the League's leader changed as radically as did the intent and structure of the League itself. Mayenne was confronted with a whole new set of problems differing from those which his brother had faced in his tenure of leadership. The question of maintaining preponderant influence at Court was no longer a salient issue. Rather than restrain the hostilities of his party against the king he now directed these efforts and emotions. The primary requirement was to find some superficially constitutional title which would lend an aura of legitimacy to the man who became leader of a movement diametrically opposed to the established authority.

Upon Mayenne's arrival in Paris on 12 February the Conseil Général debated several possible titles, such as Protector, Regent and Governor, to confer upon him, but finally decided on the office of lieutenant-général du royaume.[56] Originally an aide to the Constable of France, the lieutenant-general had in the sixteenth century come to be recognized as an independent officer, appointed by the king.[57] However, the powers of the position were never clearly defined; the title of lieutenant-general seems to have been granted primarily as an expedient to avoid allotting the holder any position, such as the constableship, which carried a strictly delineated jurisdiction. The first to hold this title as a rank apart from the Constable's administration was François de Guise, in 1557, followed by Antoine de Bourbon in 1562[58] and the future Henri III, then duc d'Anjou, in 1569. In all these cases it was a makeshift position, ostensibly a reward for services rendered but actually an honorific, powerless promotion, designed to maintain the loyalty of a dangerous subject. After a brief vacancy, the office was granted on 4 August 1588 to the duc de Guise, again as an expedient, and again with no defined boundaries to its jurisdiction. The brevet elevating Guise to the rank expressed in vague, general terms that he was to have command of the armed forces of the kingdom "in our [Henri III's] absence" as well as the normal financial and judicial administration of the military.[59] However, apart from this, Guise was allotted no other privileges or duties of a civil nature and it was clearly stipulated that the position was not hereditary. The advice of the Archbishop of Lyon, in saying that the position was only what Guise would make of it himself, obviously stemmed from this ambiguity.

In their unprecedented position, Mayenne and the Conseil Général recognized the advantages in the flexibility and lack of definition of this post. As well as expanding its function, they also altered the official designation. On 13 March 1589 Mayenne took oath before the Parlement as lieutenant-général de l'Éstat royal et couronne de France, attendant l'assemblée des Éstats du royaume. He vowed

> to maintain the Catholic religion, to conserve the royal state in its entirety, to guard the authority of the sovereign courts and the privileges of the clergy and nobility, to observe the laws and ordinances of the kingdom and the obedience due to the magistrates, to preserve the people of France from all oppression and to employ the force and power granted him to the honour of God and the good of the kingdom.[60]

This formula, the final result of weeks of debate and haggling, was a succinct expression of both the nature of the office and its relationship to the crown. Its authority stemmed from the League -- which purported to speak for the wishes of France -- and not the monarch, although the monarchical nature of the kingdom was stipulated. While Mayenne considered himself the lieutenant-general of the League's king, Charles X, he never styled himself as such, always employing the above formula. He had become lieutenant-general because he was the leader of the League. The title only granted official status to the movement's chief. His activities were not to be substantially altered by elevation to that rank; its prestige was to complement and facilitate his normal operations.

The League's justification for Mayenne assuming the office of lieutenant-general, with the attendant claim to act as head of government, remained the same as the justification for the revolt in general.[61] Henri III was a tyrant, a condemnation confirmed by the Sorbonne; therefore an interim government was necessary pending the election of a new king. Two years later, in May 1591, a handful of deputies who had journeyed to Reims for the Estates-General -- which did not meet at that time -- signed a memoir reaffirming Mayenne's position. As lieutenant-general, it claimed, Mayenne was a representative of the then-empty throne and possessed the necessary powers to lead the movement against Henri de Navarre or any other who attempted to usurp the crown.[62] This was simply a restatement of reasoning used by the League since February 1589. "The duc de Mayenne has been chosen as chief," wrote the Conseil Général in instructions to the ambassador to the pope, "in order to maintain the forms of the French monarchy . . .

and to preserve the crown in its entirety."[63]

Royalist reaction to this newest pretension of the League and its leader was predictably rapid. In February 1589 Henri III outlawed Mayenne and all those who dared to follow him. "We are not compelled to account for our actions to anyone but God," declared Henri, but in this instance he condescended to explain, at great length, the treason of Guise and the misguided loyalty to his brother that was spurring on the duc de Mayenne.[64] A pamphlet which appeared in April included most of the major points against Mayenne and the League. He had had himself created lieutenant-general, asserted the author, because he was too cowardly to claim the crown outright. All validity of this position was denied, for it stemmed from "those who have no power, office or authority in this kingdom other than that granted by unbridled violence, rebellion and popular sedition."[65] But this propaganda had little effect other than to inspire equally vehement rebuttals and attacks upon Henri III and his ally and heir apparent, Henri de Navarre. The legitimacy of its government and leader was an accepted fact and necessarily a basic assumption for the League. The main problem was to organize and prepare, under the auspices of the leader, a program which would result in the defeat of their enemies and the creation of a new sovereign for a France conforming to the League's program.

A dominant feature of Mayenne's position was its purely temporary character. As stated in his title, he was "awaiting the estates of France" to choose a king and end the interregnum. But in the meantime his capacities were wide-ranging and almost totally undefined. This uncertainty enabled Mayenne to exercise, or attempt to exercise, full, unrestricted, virtually sovereign power throughout

League-dominated France. Indicative of his authority is a remark recorded by L'Estoile on the eve of the Estates-General of 1593, when Mayenne responded to an exhortation to promptly elect a king with "what more could a King do for you than I am doing now?"[66]

The Conseil Général fashioned a new seal and used it for the first time on the document granting Mayenne his position as lieutenant-general. However, conforming to the other new League formulas, it was now styled "le scel du royaume de France" and entrusted to the care of an appointee of the duke.[67] Representative of the absence of the cardinal de Bourbon, Charles X, the seal's face depicted an empty throne, adorned with the crown, sceptre and other trappings of the French king.[68] This physical embodiment of the royal authority remained under Mayenne's control for the duration of his leadership, serving as tangible evidence of the authority he wielded and justification for the role he had assumed. But the actual powers of his position as leader of the League and lieutenant-general of the kingdom remain nebulous in the extreme. Lack of any concrete organization in the League contributes to this confusion. However, a broad overview of his activities as leader does reveal some of the duties which fell to him and the nature and scope of his influence in Leaguer France.

One of Mayenne's most important roles was that of chief of the administration of the League. He oversaw the normal bureaucratic procedures and handled other problems as they arose. But the disruption of the centralized administration promoted by the Wars of Religion had accelerated in the years of the League, making the effective exercise of national authority impossible for anyone, let alone a rebellious leader like Mayenne. He owed his title to the Conseil Général of Paris, where the League and its administration were strongest. His power centred around and was largely dependent upon this city, beyond which his authority waned, conditional upon his presence or the goodwill of local leaders. But he was the recognized superior of other individuals and corporate groups or institutions within the movement. He had the authority to create new governing bodies; on 16 February 1589 fourteen of his own candidates were added to the Council established in Paris in the previous December, giving birth to the Conseil Général de l'Union. When the Conseil proved intractable, it was dissolved and replaced by a Conseil d'État.[69] The excuse for the dissolution of the old body and the creation of the Conseil d'État was the official recognition of the cardinal de Bourbon as Charles X on 21 November 1589 by the Parlement of Paris.[70] This necessitated the revival of the traditional administrative forms based around the monarch. Composed of four Secretaries of State and a Keeper of the Seals, the Archbishop of Lyon, the Conseil conformed to the practice of former Conseils d'État by following its leader in his travels. It constituted the inner core of a personal government whose center was Mayenne, but which also included informal but nonetheless influential advisors and agents such as Villeroy and Jeannin. However, affairs did not by necessity progress through the regular channels in the Conseil d'État, for Mayenne's government remained predominantly spontaneous and unstructured. To expedite affairs he frequently employed his prerogative to bypass the Conseil, dealing with a matter directly or through a chosen intermediary.

Mayenne also exerted control over the Parlement of Paris. Although the magistrates usually proved recalcitrant toward interference with the function and personnel of the court, Mayenne considered the introduction of new members imperative. There were barely enough judges left in the Parlement to staff the eight chambers into which it was divided or to deal effectively with the cases brought before it. Throughout 1590 Mayenne urged the Parlement to fill the many vacant presidents' chairs, but no response was forthcoming.[71] Finally, on 2 December 1591 the parlémentaires, still cowed by the murder of three of their colleagues by the Seize, consented to Mayenne's appointment of four new presidents to expand their ranks.[72] Similar forced appointments occurred in the parlements of Rouen and Dijon, each time with Mayenne's candidates allowed entry only "à grand peine."[73] But numbers in the Parlement remained very low throughout the League period, many of its members preferring to keep a guarded neutrality or to join the royalist Parlement sitting at Tours. The remaining few grew increasingly restive at the pressures brought to bear upon them by the Parisian League and the numerous attempts to interfere with the operations of the court.

The largely personal nature of Mayenne's administration gave him control over appointments to the major offices of Leaguer France and influence in the assignation of many subordinate positions. As well as the members of the Conseil d'État, many of the League's military leaders owed their appointments to him. Indeed, in his brief tenure of power Mayenne even created, on his own authority, five new Marshals of France.[74] He also insisted on the lucrative farm of the taxes of Paris for one of his nominees, because of "the affection he has for our holy religion," he claimed, but more likely to ensure delivery of these funds to himself rather than the Seize, who had appropriated this profitable sinecure early in the revolt.[75] Another area in which he exercised his powers of patronage was in the designation of governors for the provinces and cities adhering to the League. In many cases, governors in sympathy with the League retained their positions after 1589. This was particularly true of the vast numbers of Mayenne's relatives who had reaped the benefits of the family's ascendancy in the early League period. In Brittany the duc de Mercoeur declared for Mayenne and the League, although he disregarded any 'suggestions' that conflicted with his own program. Mercoeur was able to channel the traditional Breton hostility toward French interference in the duchy into support for the League, maintaining, however, the particularism of the province. Another virtually independent relative was the duc de Nemours, governor of the Lyonnais, although he never achieved the same degree of success as Mercoeur in exerting his authority over the province.

Other less powerful administrators kept smaller provinces and towns in allegiance to the League, but power increasingly fell into the hands of local strongmen, who could summarily declare themselves governors of towns or areas by right of conquest, with only cursory acknowledgement to the party leader. Such seizures of power were usually limited to outlying regions such as Brittany and the south, where, in the Dauphiné, a succession of appointed and self-appointed governors pitted themselves against the royalist governor, the duc de Lesdiguieres. Closer to the centre of League activity Mayenne did manage to retain a semblance of control over these appointments. Deaths, defections, and new conquests necessitated readjustments and new commissions, accompanied by exhortations to the local magistracy to lend strict obedience to the new governors.[76] Followers of Mayenne from the ranks of the middle nobility were appointed leaders in Normandy, Berri, and Champagne. These men owed their positions to Mayenne; they and their subordinates, such as the governor of Rouen, more or less conformed to his orders. The tenuous power of the leader, however, usually left them the arbiters of the majority of affairs, in which Mayenne did not have the time nor often the knowledge to interfere.

One of Mayenne's fundamental powers, implicit in his title, was that of convoking the Estates-General of France. Remonstrances from the various sectors of the League continually requested the leader to call the estates and have the problems of the kingdom settled by a "devoutly Catholic King." On numerous occasions letters of convocation were actually circulated, but the threat posed by the military successes of Henri de Navarre caused the meeting to be postponed time and again.[77] Opponents of the League's aspirations argued that the estates could not legitimately be convoked by anyone except the king, but the League reply, until the death of the cardinal de Bourbon in May 1590, was that Mayenne was simply acting in the name of the monarch. After this date the grounds for Mayenne's authority were less sound, the argument being that Mayenne, as chief of administration, had to solve the problem of the throne's vacancy in the only manner possible, election of a new king. Leaguer political theory all the while leaned more and more to proving the elective nature of the crown and the integral part that should be played by the Estates-General in the operation of the government.[78]

Despite their obvious importance, these functions of Mayenne as leader were secondary to his essential role, that of commander-in-chief of the League's war effort. The entire character of the movement under Mayenne was based upon the necessity for military actions against its enemies. Only through successes in the field could the League's programs be realized in a substantial, enduring fashion. As one of the prime reasons for and responsibilities of his position, Mayenne assumed the direction of the League's military forces, mobilizing and co-ordinating scattered contingents and disparate aims into concerted national campaigns. For example, in planning the strategy for the campaigning season of 1591, he first wrote to all commanders concerned. Mercoeur was to create a diversion on the lower Loire, supported by the troops from the garrisons of lower Poitou.[79] While this maneuvre would force the royalists to shift more strength to the west coast, Mayenne, in conjunction with the reinforcements expected from Parma, was to raise the impending siege of Chartres and dislodge Henri de Navarre's forces from their stranglehold on Paris, freeing supply lines to the capital.[80] Of course, many such plans foundered as a result of lack of co-operation from local commanders or, considering the resources at hand, the overambitious nature of the projects. But there did exist a central organizer with the authority to set far-flung garrisons and companies into motion. As well, local authorities often turned to Mayenne for military assistance when their own forces proved insufficient for their needs.[81]

In addition to his role as general director of the League in arms, Mayenne also led the main army of the movement. It was raised on Mayenne's authority and acted under his orders.[82] Indeed, it served as the backbone of Mayenne's power and was used several times to intimidate the Seize. Most of his time as leader was spent with this army; occasional trips to Paris were undertaken only when events demanded. The size of the army fluctuated depending upon the money available and the number of auxiliaries in the ranks, and although Mayenne called the ban and the arrière-ban, which called the nobility to serve in the royal army, "to sustain the rights of our natural and legitimate king, the cardinal de Bourbon,"[83] its strength was seldom adequate to overcome the military obstacles faced by the League. Money for payment of the troops supposedly came from taxation, but since, in practice, the little money that managed to reach Paris or was raised in the capital was diverted for internal uses,[84] the lieutenant-general never had enough money. In a letter to the pope in May 1591 he claimed to have spent over 1,200,000 écus of his personal income for the cause of the League.[85] Though this probably represents an exaggeration, the duke nonetheless was often to commit his own fortune for the maintenance of his army.

Inevitably, Mayenne was forced to appeal for foreign subsidy to supplement the meagre funds he received through the League. The task of obtaining this support apparently fell upon him personally for, with the exception of the duc de Mercoeur, no others received regular subsidies on an extensive scale or were in communication with foreign powers. Only Mayenne conducted negotiations for military or financial support; his letters are replete with requests and, later, pleas for greater aid, whether from Spain or the pope.

The correspondence of Mayenne is widely scattered and, in common with a great deal of League records, much of it was destroyed shortly after the victory of Henri IV. However, his letters from November 1590 to June 1591 have been collected and published.[86] This correspondence clearly illustrates Mayenne acting in his capacity as leader of the League, functioning as a general co-ordinator and director of League efforts and policies throughout France and Europe.

Mayenne's person constituted virtually the only central institution of the League, and as a result the majority of the intra-League military, administrative and diplomatic communications, as well as conduct of foreign matters, either emanated from him and his immediate subordinates or was directed to him. The settlement of personal squabbles, demands for financial support, complaints of excessive exactions, attempts to induce Parma to send military succour, and requests for papal dispensations to allow his army to eat meat during Lent were all everyday problems for the leader of the League. The axis of League affairs, he also acted as a sort of official source of information for the organization. Few of his dispatches are without the latest news of the continuing successes of the war, usually contained in embellished accounts of his own exploits. Apart from these exaggerations, his letters are a coherent reflection of both League and royalist activities. In response to the dearth of provisions in Paris after the siege of 1590 he sent two Secretaries of State to Rouen to investigate that city's seizure of goods destined for the capital.[87] When the aim of the royalist campaign of early 1591 clearly appeared to be the city of Chartres he warned the inhabitants of this threat and ordered the absent governor of the city to return and strengthen the fortifications.[88] The number of examples are endless, and all point to the same conclusion; in virtually every activity in which the League was involved, Mayenne considered the primary responsibility and authority to be his own. The hundreds of letters all support the impression of a man fully cognizant of his superior position, a man who expected to be heeded.

In retrospect, one must conclude that the murder of the Guises in December 1588 and the consequent reaction to Henri III resulted in a general reassessment of the League's goals and means and a reorganization of its structure and governance. These transitions occurred almost instantaneously, so that by the spring of 1589, well before the retaliatory stroke against Henri III, the activities of the League had assumed new dimensions. It no longer functioned as a pressure group, acting within the boundaries of grudging obedience to the sovereign, but launched a coherent revolt against his authority, claiming the right to select a successor who would conform to the League's religious, political, and constitutional tenets. The markedly new character of the League's activities coincided with and was the result of the demise of Guise and the termination of his leadership. A new course for the League and a new role for the leader unfolded in the period of Mayenne's direction. New goals and revised organization wrought a change in the opportunities, position and powers of the leader. Events had radically altered the station occupied by Mayenne from that held by his brother, the duc de Guise.

However, the League was not a cohesive unit. Its organization and structure were founded on expediency and in haste. Few unifying forces existed within the League to integrate the multitude of particularist and factional interests. As in so many other rebellious groups, these differences had remained submerged so long as the organization was gaining power but came to the fore almost immediately upon the group's ascendancy. Mayenne's task became not only the furtherance of the military and political goals of the League, but also the maintenance of a balance between the factions. These not only represented conflicting opinions on the means and ends of the League, but became progressively more serious threats to Mayenne's own position.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1] See René de Bouillé, *Histoire des ducs de Guise* (Paris, 1850), III, 499-500, for the document which formally apportioned the lands and wealth of François de Guise among his sons, including the share given to Henri, who became duc de Guise, and Charles, then marquis de Mayenne.

[2] For a discussion of Mayenne and his government of Burgundy see Henri Drouot, *Mayenne et la Bourgogne. Étude sur la Ligue, 1587-1596* (Paris, 1937), I, Introduction.

[3] Upon completion of the campaign, Mayenne published a long and somewhat exaggerated account of his exploits. The royalist propagandists made a critical and rather humorous reply: "Fidele Exposition sur la Déclaration du Duc de Mayenne, contenant les exploits de guerre qu'il a faits en Guyenne," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, I, 451-476.

[4] H. Forneron, *Les Ducs de Guise et leur Époque* (Paris, 1877), II, 373.

[5] Joseph de Croze, *Les Guises, les Valois et Philippe II* (Paris, 1866), II, 180.

[6] The letters of Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, to Philip II in late December and early January reflect this uncertainty as to Mayenne's location. Some of these letters are published *ibid*., 382-394.

[7] Drouot, *Mayenne et la Bourgogne*, I, 230-260, gives a complete account of the events leading up to Mayenne's decision to take the leadership and of the changes he made in the government of Burgundy.

[8] A letter to this effect from Mayenne to the pope on 19 January 1589 is cited by Henri de L'Épinois, *La Ligue et les Papes* (Paris, 1886), 290. See also Mayenne's letter to the *Bureau de la Ville* of Paris on 6 January 1589, in which he stated his intention of getting to Paris as soon as possible; *Histoire Générale de Paris*, 19 vols. (Paris, 1902), vol. IX, *Registres des Délibérations du Bureau de la Ville de Paris*, ed. François Bonnardot, 229.

[9] There is a description of this plot, with the roles played by the *Seize*, Mayenne and Guise in Jacques-Auguste de Thou, *Histoire Universelle* (The Hague, 1740), VI, 526-530.

[10] Mendoza to Philip II, 13 October 1588, Croze, *Les Guises*, II, 368.

[11] Bureau de la Ville to Mayenne, 1 January 1589, Registres, IX, 220.

[12] This letter, from 6 January 1589, is published ibid., 229.

[13] Adrien Lezat, De la Prédication sous Henri IV (Paris, 1871), provides a good background on the social and political role of the Parisian prédicateur.

[14] L'Estoile, Registre-Journal de Henri III, 278-279.

[15] This discussion is based upon the analysis of the work in F. Baumgartner, "The Political Thought of the Radicals of the Catholic League of Paris, 1584-1594" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1972), 177-212. Although not published until later in 1589 De Justa Abdicatione is representative of the ideas prevalent earlier in the year.

[16] Mémoires de la Ligue, III, 182.

[17] "Declaration du Roi, portant oubliance et assoupissement des contraventions qui ont été faites par aucuns de ses sujets Catholiques," ibid., 170-173.

[18] Two of the most interesting of these pamphlets are "La vie et faicts notables de Henri de Valois" and "Les Sorcelleries de Henri de Valois", both in Archives Curieuses, XII.

[19] In the last two decades there has been a debate over whether sixteenth century revolts were revolutionary attacks on the state or simply rebellions. The two most significant contributions are J.H. Elliott, "Revolution and Continuity in Early Modern Europe," Past and Present, 42 (1969), 35-36, and H.G. Koenigsberger, "The Organization of Revolutionary Parties in France and the Netherlands during the Sixteenth Century," Journal of Modern History, XXVII (1955), 335-351. Both argue that the Seize, as other groups of the period, were renovators rather than innovators. In De la Démocratie chez les Prédicateurs de la Ligue (Paris, 1866), Charles Labitte, the main exponent of the idea of the "democratic League", failed to prove the existence of any truely democratic movement in the League as a result of a failure to define his terms. It would seem that he meant by democracy any form of limitation upon the sovereign's power. Despite his assertions that the Seize and prédicateurs wanted to abolish the monarchy, he continually referred to the restrictions -- for example, frequent meetings of the Estates-General -- that they simply wanted to impose upon the existing structure.

[20] An example of this attitude is "Causes plus Particuliers qui obligent chaque état, surtout la Noblesse, de prendre les armes," Mémoires de la Ligue, III, 529-533. Henri III's declaration against Mayenne in February 1589 elicited another defense of the League's goals, ibid., 492-512.

[21] The cardinal's early life and his role in the League are described in Eugène Saulnier, *Le rôle politique du Cardinal de Bourbon* (Paris, 1912).

[22] The only major work devoted entirely to the *Seize* is Peter Max Ascoli, "'The Sixteen' and the Paris League, 1585-1594" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1971). Despite the detailed research of his study, Ascoli was unable to determine the exact membership or numbers of the *Seize*. Several attempts have been made to list the members, but the basic problem is that there was a constant change in the names. See De Lamar Jensen, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism: Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League* (Cambridge, 1964), 134-135, and Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Histoire Universelle*, ed. Alphonse de Ruble (Paris, 1886-1899), VIII, 150.

[23] Palma Cayet, 87.

[24] See *Registres*, IX, 210ff., for numerous letters to the colonels of the militia to take various security measures, for example a letter of 2 January 1589 to raise a company of *arquebusiers* to guard Vincennes, *ibid*., 223.

[25] For the events in Paris in the days following 24 December and for the meeting of 25 December see the narratives in Palma Cayet, 87-89; Victor de Chalambert, *Histoire de la Ligue sous les Règnes de Henri III et de Henri IV* (Paris, 1854), I, 224-249, and Ascoli, "'The Sixteen'", 269-276.

[26] Palma Cayet, 87, mentions the election of the Council and the appointment of the duc d'Aumâle.

[27] See Ascoli, "'The Sixteen'", 37-43, for the former position and the origins of many of the *Seize*.

[28] There are numerous contemporary accounts of the purge of the *Parlement*, all substantially the same. See, for example, L'Estoile, *Registre-Journal de Henri III*, 280-281 and Palma Cayet, 89; a modern account is Édouard Maugis, *Histoire du Parlement de Paris* (Paris, 1914-1916), II, 56-64.

[29] This was the "Declaration du Roi" of early January 1589, in *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 170-173.

[30] *Ibid*., 178. There is another copy of the oath in *Archives Curieuses*, XII, 327-329.

[31] Isambert *et al*., gen. ed., *Recueil Général des Anciennes Lois Françaises, depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la Révolution de 1789* (Paris, 1822-1833), XIV, 633-635. The takeover is also mentioned in L'Estoile, *Registre-Journal de Henri III*, 280.

[32] "Édit de translation du Parlement de Paris en la ville de Tours," Isambert, *Recueil Général*, XIV, 633-635.

[33] Maugis, *Histoire du Parlement*, II, 70.

[34] Palma Cayet, 90-91.

[35] For Lyon, see Pierre Richard, *La Papauté et la Ligue française: Pierre d'Epinac, archevêque de Lyon, 1573-1599* (Paris, 1901), 445ff. Extracts from the deliberations of the *Parlement* of Toulouse and the *Conseil de la Ville* are in Jean Loutchitzky, *Documents Inédits pour servir à l'Histoire de la Réforme et de la Ligue* (Paris, 1875), 242-262.

[36] Palma Cayet, 91, describes an unsuccessful attempt by Oudineau to retain the allegiance of Chalons to the League.

[37] *Registres*, IX, 210-219, passim. See a typical circular letter, from 12 January 1589, to the towns of the Ile-de-France, *ibid*., 243-244.

[38] *Bureau de la Ville* to Dreux, 29 December 1588, *ibid*., 217.

[39] For the history of Burgundy under the League see the detailed study of Henri Drouot, *Mayenne et la Bourgogne*.

[40] Richard, *La Papauté et la Ligue*, 445-465, describes the *Conseil* of Lyon. The oath sworn by the inhabitants of the city is in *Archives Curieuses*, XII, 324-326. Documents concerning the insurrection of 1593 are collected in Loutchitzky, *Documents Inédits*, 281-295.

[41] Martin Wolfe, *The Fiscal System of Renaissance France* (New Haven, 1972), 203-204, provides a discussion of the provincial takeover of the royal fiscal structure.

[42] Roland Mousnier, *La Venalité des Offices sous Henri IV et Louis XIII*, 2nd. ed., (Paris, 1971), 582.

[43] See the vigorous *arrêts* issued by these two *parlements* against Henri de Navarre on 19 and 22 August 1589, *Mémoires de la Ligue*, IV, 45-48.

[44] "Articles Rémontres à Monseigneur le Duc de Mayenne," *ibid*., III, 536.

[45] This letter is *ibid*., 325-327.

[46] The argument that the deputies did not go to Paris due to the dangers of the trip and the heavy expenses involved in remaining in Paris for any length of time can only be considered as a partial explanation for the lack of provincial deputies on the *Conseil Général*. For the Estates-General of 1593 delegates from the province did go to Paris, when the dangers and costs were much higher than in 1589. Apparently the towns were pre-occupied with their own problems and had little interest in this central Council.

[47] J. Dupont-White, *La Ligue à Beauvais* (Paris, 1846), 238-239.

[48] "Declaration des princes Catholiques Unis avec les trois États de France, pour la rémission et décharge d'un quart des Tailles et Crues," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 176-1777. See also *Registres*, IX, 248.

[49] *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 326.

[50] The incident is described in *Registres*, IX, 245-246.

[51] L'Estoile, *Registre-Journal de Henri III*, 279. The first levy had been on 2 January; *Registres*, IX, 223.

[52] "Avis et abjuration d'un notable gentilhomme de la Ligue: contenant les causes pour lesquelles il a rénoncé à ladite Ligue et s'en est présentement departi," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, VI, 221-230.

[53] "Instruction à Monsieur de Guise, rétourné en cour, par l'Archevesque de Lyon, après la paix de Juillet 1588," *Archives Curieuses*, XII, 15-22. The letter was written late in August.

[54] *Ibid*., 16.

[55] *Ibid*., 18.

[56] de Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, VII, 384-385.

[57] Gaston Zeller, *Les Institutions de la France au XVI Siècle* (Paris, 1948), 85n., discusses the title of lieutenant-general.

[58] Antoine de Bourbon had received it as a sort of consolation prize for relinquishing his claims to be Regent in the minority of Charles IX. The deal he concluded with Catherine de Medici gave him partial control of the Royal Seal, but the Queen Mother maneuvered her way out of this concession. See Alphonse de Ruble, *Antoine de Bourbon et Jeanne d'Albret* (Paris, 1881-1886), III, 65-66.

[59] *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 57-59.

[60] Palma Cayet, 121.

[61] See "Causes plus particulières qui obligent chaque état, surtout la Noblesse, de prendre les armes," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 529-533.

[62] This document is in E. Henry et Charles Loriquet, eds., *Correspondance du duc de Mayenne* (Reims, 1860-1862), II, 276.

[63] "Mémoires et Instructions," 25 May 1589, *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 320-321.

[64] "Declaration contre les ducs de Mayenne et d'Aumalle, qui enjoint de leur courir sus," Isambert, *Recueil Général*, XIV, 635-643.

[65] *Mémoires de la Ligue*, IV, 152.

[66] Ernest Lavisse, gen. ed., *Histoire de France depuis les Origines jusqu'à la Révolution* (Paris, 1900-1911), vol. VI, pt. i, J.H. Mariéjol, *La Réforme et la Ligue, L'Édit de Nantes, 1559-1598* (Paris, 1904), 365.

[67] Palma Cayet, 103.

[68] Saulnier, *Cardinal de Bourbon*, 270.

[69] For a discussion of the *Conseil d'État* see Palma Cayet, 191, and Richard, *La Papauté et la Ligue*, 361-363.

[70] Saulnier, *Cardinal de Bourbon*, 238-239.

[71] See, for example, Mayenne to *Parlement*, 6 December 1590, *Correspondance*, I, 99-101.

[72] Isambert, *Recueil Général*, XV, 33. A list of the four and their careers is in Maugis, *Histoire du Parlement*, III, 275.

[73] Mousnier, *La Venalité des Offices*, 582.

[74] The new "*maréchals de la Ligue*" were Villars, La Châtre, Boisdauphin, Rosne and St. Pol. See Louis Maimbourg, *The History of the League*, trans. by 'Mr. Dryden' (London, 1684), 871-874.

[75] Mayenne to "*les gens tenant la Bureau de la Ville*," 7 January 1591, *Correspondance*, I, 270-271.

[76] Palma Cayet, 91.

[77] For the various attempts to get the estates to meet see Auguste Bernard, ed., *Procès-Verbaux des États-Generaux de 1593* (Paris, 1842), xxxi-li.

[78] See, for example, *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 492-512. For a review of the contemporary arguments on the powers of the estates see Richard A. Jackson, "Elective Kingship and *Consensus Populi* in Sixteenth Century France," *Journal of Modern History*, XLIV (1972), 155-172.

[79] Mayenne to Mercoeur, 7 January 1591, *Correspondance*, I, 273-275, and Mayenne to Diou, 19 November 1590, *ibid.*, 43-45.

[80] Mayenne to Diou, 16 April 1591, *ibid.*, II, 160-161.

[81] For example, in February 1590 Mayenne sent a force to Beauvais to help that town defeat a company of royalists harrying the countryside; Dupont-White, *La Ligue à Beauvais*, 93.

[82] Palma Cayet, 91, mentions that Mayenne gathered a strong force before leaving Burgundy in January 1589.

[83] L'Estoile, Registre-Journal pour le règne d'Henri IV, vol. XV of Michaud and Poujoulat, 10.

[84] An instance of this is in Registres, IX, 387.

[85] Mayenne to Gregory XIV, May 1591, Correspondance, II, 204.

[86] E. Henry and Charles Loriquet, eds., Correspondance du duc de Mayenne (Reims, 1860-1862).

[87] 17 November 1590, ibid., I, 28-38.

[88] Mayenne to M. de La Bourdaisière, 2 January, 1591, ibid., 254-255.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN UNITY: MAYENNE AND THE FACTIONS

Among Henri de Navarre's supporters there existed relative harmony despite the numerous possibilities for conflict presented by the presence of a minority of Catholics among his followers and soldiers. Although this harmony may partially be attributed to Navarre's abilities and personality, the unity of purpose of his following may have been the major determining factor. The attainment of the throne was, in the final analysis, Navarre's only objective, and in this his adherents, Catholic as well as Huguenot, were closely united behind him. The major division concerned the means to be employed, not the end to be reached: would Henri attempt to capture the throne by defeating the armies of the League or would he convert to Catholicism, thereby invalidating the League's primary argument against his accession. Many believed that conversion would accomplish more than years of fighting. It would win the majority of Leaguers, who fought from the sincere conviction that a Huguenot monarch on the throne of France would be a contradiction in terms. This group of Navarre's supporters, which increased in size as the years of conflict dragged on, were called the *Politiques*.[1] But disagreement as to the means did not cause internal strife. Many of the *Politiques* chose to follow Navarre in his army while others simply withdrew from the action and waited for a decision to be reached before granting him their full support. They did not, however, mount any overt opposition to force a decision upon their leader.

In direct contrast to this unity, the multitude of differences and diverse interests among the rank and file of the Catholic League were not held in abeyance for the sake of the movement. Each of the problems faced by the League suggested a number of possible solutions, each of which had its staunch supporters. Thus some Leaguers wanted to take full advantage of the assistance proferred by Philip II and concede the attendant compensations demanded by the Spanish monarch, while others wanted complete dissociation from any dependency upon foreign aid. But in addition to disputes over means, the ultimate end of the League was in fact called into question. A large group, changing with events, wanted to recognize the claims of Henri de Navarre, conditional upon his conversion. On the other hand, the more vocal minority shrunk from the idea of such an act and rejected Henri's claim to the throne outright, even in the event of his becoming a Catholic. They remembered that Navarre had, in 1572, renounced his heresy in order to save his life, then quickly reverted to his old faith upon his escape from the court in 1576. Such apostasy could not be forgiven, nor could the ultra-Catholics believe his sincerity if he again renounced the religion of his birth. Still others preferred to remain detached from the central conflict and concentrated instead upon their private interests, which could easily be furthered given the preoccupation of the governmental authorities.

The task of drawing together these disparate elements fell to Mayenne as leader. So long as such discord existed within the League no effective resistance could be mounted against the enemy, nor could a viable solution to the succession to the throne be reached. Yet Mayenne's authority was too circumscribed by the range of conflicting interests for him to pursue effectively any policy satisfactory to all sectors of League opinion. His decisions often were based upon what could expediently be accomplished without meeting an overwhelming opposition or in the hopes of ingratiating himself with one group within the League. Hence the principles and goals of the Holy Union often had to be compromised.

Despite Mayenne's conciliatory manner of running the League, and perhaps partly as a result of it, his actions increasingly met with criticism. Apparently the only area in which he went unchallenged was in the consensus that he should be the director of the war effort. Even the Conseil Général de l'Union was prepared to concede that much:

> It is necessary that until the resolution of the Estates-General the army and the State must be led by a single chief, to obviate the confusion, disorder and disputes caused by a diversity of command.[2]

Beyond this strictly military function Mayenne seldom could be assured of the support of even a significant minority of the followers of the League. Concerted action behind him or any other leader was almost non-existent. Consequently, the period between 1589 and the opening of the Estates-General in 1593 witnessed a succession of internal disputes, which often flared into violence. The failure to resolve them resulted in a dismal, inconclusive ending to the long-expected assembly and foretold the ultimate collapse of the League and of Mayenne.

Members of Mayenne's own family were active in the factional struggle before the estates of 1593 and posed one of the major threats both to the solidarity of the League and to Mayenne's position. Although none of them ever directly challenged the declared leader, they nonetheless caused him trouble, since they possessed a status high enough to be able to disregard his authority with impunity. The ducs de Lorraine, Nemours, Mercoeur, and the young duc de Guise could proceed freely toward their own objectives. All of them, with the exception of Mercoeur, considered themselves possible candidates for the throne of France; and all aspired to the complete control of one or more of the French provinces. Mayenne could give these four men orders dealing with military affairs with a reasonable expectation of being obeyed, but he did not, and probably could not, presume to dictate their politics and political allegiances. Fortunately for Mayenne, these princes never combined to form a united faction; each one remained preoccupied with his own interest and advancement.

The most powerful yet the most indirect disruptive force amongst Mayenne's relatives was the head of the family, Charles III, duc de Lorraine. Never more than marginally involved in League affairs, he had become more interested after the death of Guise had removed the dominating personality from the movement. Charles had designs upon the crown of France, if not for himself then for his son, and based his claim upon rather dubious genealogies, prepared on his orders, which traced his descent from Charlemagne.[3] He was in close contact with Philip II and the duke of Parma and frequently broached the topic of his candidacy in his letters to these men. However, the duc de Lorraine and his duchy were too distant from the mainstream of events in France to be given more than passing attention by Philip or the Leaguers. Realizing his position, Charles decided to compensate for his impotence, laying claim to most of north-eastern France. In the name of the League he captured Toul and Verdun, then threatened the province of Champagne. A considerable amount of tension resulted from this unrequested 'assistance', and it was only in November 1591 that Mayenne and Lorraine concluded an agreement which effectively halted Charles' encroachments.[4] Thereafter, the duc de Lorraine turned his concern more to the defense of his own lands. Henri de Navarre had married the vicomte de Turenne to the widow of the duc de Bouillon, whose lands were adjacent to and coveted by Lorraine, and Turenne compaigned vigourously to expel the occupying Lorrainers from his new duchy.

A more persistent and quite obnoxious rival to Mayenne emerged in 1590 in the person of the duc de Nemours. Young and impetuous, he became the hero of the League after his energetic direction of the defence of Paris in the siege of 1590. His next major task was in the summer of 1591, when Mayenne sent him to Burgundy to expel the royalist army that was devastating the countryside. Nemours succeeded in this endeavour, then promptly began to interfere in the governance of Mayenne's province. Sennecey, the lieutenant-governor, was arrested and released only after several stern warnings from Mayenne.[5] Undaunted, Nemours attempted to cultivate a personal following by lavishing patronage upon many of the Burgundian nobles, but by his generally maladroit methods he managed to incur the enmity of most of the towns and to alienate a substantial proportion of the nobility he had tried to woo. However, the ambitions of the young prince were not satisfied with the achievement of notoriety. He wanted to be King. In November 1592 Nemours sent an ambassador to Mayenne to request Mayenne's endorsement of his candidacy for the throne in the coming Estates.[6] The ambassador was to detail the talents and abilities of Nemours and to promise Mayenne the Constableship if he supported his younger cousin. There is no evidence that Mayenne ever heard this proposal, but such a move certainly indicates a lack of political perception on the part of Nemours, for Mayenne's actions up to that time had clearly betrayed his hostility to the idea of any prince of his family gaining the crown.[7] After the inconclusive estates, Nemours returned to his province -- the Lyonnais -- and continued to cause trouble, for which he was imprisoned by the inhabitants of Lyon. He escaped later that year and fled to Flanders where he died -- poisoned, according to L'Estoile[8] -- in 1595, "regretted only by the Spaniards, who lost a partisan capable of stirring up new troubles in the kingdom."[9]

In contrast to Lorraine and Nemours, the duc de Mercoeur, governor and virtually independent ruler of Brittany, did not become involved in the national affairs of the League. When it was to his personal benefit he would follow Mayenne's plans of campaign, but in other cases, such as allowing the passage of salt to Paris at the normal price, he proved extremely obstructive.[10] The League in Brittany followed the direction dictated by Mercoeur, and indeed, Brittany had few dealings with the rest of France in this period, maintaining the traditional Breton isolation. It did not pose any danger to Mayenne, but Mercoeur's assistance could have benefited the League immensely. However, the duke preferred to secure his own subsidies and auxiliary troops from Spain, administer his own province, fight only those who threatened him personally and leave the rest of the League to fend for itself. Only five Breton deputies made the journey to the estates of Paris in 1593,[11] and for five years after this date Mercoeur and the Breton League continued to hold out against Henri IV.

The year 1591 marked a low point in the fortunes of Mayenne as leader of the League. To compound his problems, the young son of the murdered duc de Guise escaped from the prison where he had been confined since the murder of his father and uncle. Henri de Navarre, according to the contemporary historian de Thou, soon realized that Guise's evasion would be a detriment rather than a boon to the League cause, since

> the League was badly disrupted and would only suffer from it [Guise's escape] rather than seize the chance to take advantage of it. It was inevitable that jealousies would grow between the uncle [Mayenne] and the nephew [Guise].[12]

Indeed, these jealousies were not long in coming, because the young Guise was actually senior to Mayenne in the family and could conceivably have claimed the leadership of the League as his right. This did not occur, but Mayenne's popularity, never great, decreased immediately after Guise's appearance upon the scene.[13] Guise became the favorite of those who looked to Spain to provide direction in the matter of choosing a king. One conceivable solution was for Guise to marry the Spanish Infanta and, with generous subsidies from Philip, become King and defeat Navarre. Eventually even Philip accepted this alternative, but by the time his decision was reached it was no longer practicable, for Henri de Navarre had already converted. Meanwhile, between 1591 and 1593, relations between Mayenne and Guise remained conspicuously strained.

Little could have been done by Mayenne to bridle the ambitions of these four dukes or many other nobles who, to a lesser extent, could do much as they pleased. Mayenne did not have the power or the personality to dominate such men, nor could he effectively combat another problem contributing to the disunity of the League; that of regional particularism. The claims of French monarchs to competence in administration throughout the kingdom had never been more than imperfectly established. The extended period of disruption of the administration and the absence of a strong national leader in the period of the League combined to topple the central bureaucratic structure that had been nurtured by Louis XI and François I; magnates such as the duc de Lorraine or the duc de Mercoeur could lay claim to huge blocs of territory quite easily, providing they had the resources to maintain and defend these lands. Cardinal Ossat, passing through France in the spring of 1590, observed in a letter to the pope that

> The different provinces of France are equally disrupted. They are no longer the limbs of the same body nor the dependents of the same kingdom. Each one has its own king, and sometimes two. . . .[14]

This division occurred on a smaller scale as well. Whether titular allegiance was owing to the League or to Henri de Navarre, local nobility or military leaders arrogated to themselves the control of an area, often simply expanding on official powers of command granted to them by the leader of their party.[15] Resistance from local inhabitants was not a serious factor; the centuries-old tradition of control by local powers with only minimal interference by any central authority had been only slightly dinted by the early absolutist monarchs of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Towns, particularly those adhering to the League, enjoyed a brief period of virtual autonomy and utilized the revolt to recoup powers and privileges lost in the previous century.[16]

Local interests took precedence over national goals. No substantial reorientation took place to change the traditional preoccupation of towns and provinces with their own affairs. If anything, the strong regionalism of France intensified during the League, since many areas were left to their own devices with little or no centralized regulation. They had to undertake their own defence, but at the same time there was an opportunity of making political and even territorial gains for themselves. The majority of the Leaguers in France, those in corporate structures as well as individuals, were more immediately concerned with self-preservation or advancement than the pursuit of the interests of the League at large. Mayenne met little actual resistance from the national Union, but by the same token he received small support in tangible forms of aid.

The case of the province of Burgundy is illustrative of this regional isolation from the affairs of the national League.[17] In Burgundy the main problems of the organization are to be found in miniature. Dijon, the capital of Burgundy, was also the capital of the Burgundian League. The Conseil d'État de la Sainte-Union of Dijon controlled that city effectively, but in the remainder of the province each town was free to decide on the acceptance or rejection of the League. To complicate matters, a royalist government and provincial parlement were founded in Auxonne late in 1589; thereafter the competing royalist and Leaguer factions would fight on both military and political fronts. Neither side had effective leadership and both were plagued with internal squabbles. Mayenne frequently tried to conciliate the factional differences within the Burgundian League, but his military responsibilities kept him at a distance and letters of warning or censure were unavailing.[18] At other times he appointed lieutenant-governors who he thought capable of reconciling the disputes, but these men were inevitably forced to take sides upon their arrival in Burgundy, which simply exacerbated the existing rifts. Nemours' mission to Burgundy in 1591, successful in driving out the marauding royalist army, concluded by loosening the League's unsteady grasp upon the province and pushing many of the moderate League nobles and towns over to the party supporting Henri de Navarre. Only the personal presence of Mayenne might have served to unite the Burgundian League. His continued absence -- he did not return to Burgundy until late in 1594 -- left his dwindling number of supporters impotent to act.

Burgundy was too concerned with these internal troubles to be able to offer any substantial amount of assistance to second Mayenne's efforts in guiding the national movement. Indeed, there appears to have been little inclination to aid Mayenne. The Burgundian Leaguers were primarily concerned with their own defence and the furtherance of the League in Burgundy. Similar attitudes were evident in the other centres of League activity in France. The ultimate objective was to elect a king, but to a large extent this was left to those at the centre of League affairs, principally Mayenne. With little aid coming from the provinces Mayenne came increasingly to rely upon the capital as his political, financial, and military base.

Paris, however, was also plagued with the internal altercations and political differences so marked in other areas of France in which the League was in control. In the capital the two conflicting League philosophies, moderate and radical, were both well represented. For three years the rival groups vied with each other for the control of the city.

A radical solution to the problems of the League was advocated in Paris by the Seize.[19] They looked to Spain to provide aid for the Catholic movement and, after the death of the cardinal de Bourbon, to furnish a candidate for the French throne. This strongly pro-Spanish position enjoyed only isolated popular support in the League and became increasingly less favored as the Estates-General of 1593 approached. In Paris the Seize advocated complete orthodoxy with regard to the tenets of the Catholic Church and obedience to the dictates of the League; and they were uncompromising in their committment to the struggle against Huguenots and Politiques: total extermination of these two groups could be the only answer to the ills of the kingdom and the victory of a true Catholic monarch. The Seize did not hesitate to employ proscription, terror, and murder against those in Paris not in agreement with their ultra-Catholic stance. Neutrality in the struggle was not recognized by the Seize, for there could be no middle ground in the battle against the heretics and the fosterers of heresy, the Politiques.

The Parisians who bore the brunt of the violence of the Seize were the moderate Leaguers, derisively called Politiques by the Seize. 'Moderate Leaguers' is simply a convenient term used to describe these men, who usually stood in opposition to the Seize, for the moderates were not an organized faction. In contrast to the highly secretive and disciplined radicals, the moderates are defined chiefly as a result of the campaigns of the Seize against them. Some organization can be inferred, but basically the term designates a group whose members were intellectually in sympathy with, but physically separated from, others of similar persuasion. Included in the 'party' were many parlémentaires, some of the Parisian businessmen and members of the municipal government who objected to the methods and ends of the radicals. The moderates did belong to the League and did adhere to its goals, but they became increasingly more active in their opposition to the extremist ambitions of the Seize, who aimed at complete control of Paris.[20] Many looked to Henri de Navarre as the candidate most likely to bring about peace by his accession and, particularly after 1590, solicited him to convert.

Relations with Paris and these two factions contending for mastery over the city comprised the most serious problems faced by Mayenne in his attempts to hold the League together. It was essential to the cause and himself that Paris remain firmly within the fold since it was the administrative and financial centre of the kingdom, a necessary prerequisite for control of France. For four years, therefore, Mayenne was forced into involvement in the factional rivalry of the capital. His policy, insofar as he had one, in dealing with the factions was one of mediation: the preservation of peace within the League regardless of the cost. He attempted to offset any threat posed by one of the competing groups by strengthening the other. Mayenne was often called upon or forced to arbitrate in the disputes between the factions, but almost invariably his conciliatory decisions served only to intensify the conflict. The moderates, he feared, would have drifted quickly to a settlement with Navarre while the Seize, if left unchallenged, would deliver Paris and France to the Spanish. Mayenne was in the peculiar position of having to maintain the spirit of resistance against Henri de Navarre but at the same time contain it lest the Seize destroy the unity of the movement by their extremism. As much as possible, therefore, he wanted to retain in Paris the status quo of 1589, with the Seize in power but restrained by himself and the moderates in the capital. Eventually this precarious balance, never having been entirely successful in keeping the peace in Paris, was upset. In a personal sense, Mayenne's chief return for his efforts was great unpopularity, particularly with the Seize, who were indignant at his continual obstruction.

Similar friction between the Seize and the leader of the League had existed under the duc de Guise, but his vigorous and successful direction of the movement, along with his insistence upon strict obedience from his followers, had contained any overt agitation by the Paris ultra-Catholics. Still, the Seize did not stop scheming to gain full sway over the capital, free from the dictates of Guise, and were in close contact with the Spanish ambassador.[21] Two months before the death of Guise Mendoza informed Philip that the Seize had requested him to "keep silent about the sums of money that they have received, because if Mucius [Guise] and the other chiefs of the League knew about it, they would immediately take it away from them."[22] Trust obviously was not the cornerstone of the League.

Upon Guise's death the Seize, freed from his restrictive influence, directed the takeover of the capital for the cause of the League. The Parlement and Chambre des Comptes were purged, potential opponents were watched, imprisoned, or exiled, and the Council of Forty was created. This was a strictly partisan group, the majority of whose deputies were members or supporters of the Seize. The enthusiastic fanfare which greeted the duc de Mayenne on his arrival at Paris on 12 February 1589 did not dispel his displeasure at some of the actions taken by the Seize. "In order that affairs be conducted and ordered with more judgement and moderation," his first act was to add fourteen members of his own choosing to the Council and to change its name to the Conseil Général de l'Union.[23] By this move Mayenne made clear his desire to remain in control and simultaneously began his dependency upon the moderate section of the League. The additional appointees to the Conseil Général were all "gens de qualité", men who could be relied upon to support the lieutenant-general. The Catholic princes were also entitled to join in the deliberations of the Conseil "quand bon leur sembleroit".[24] Thus Mayenne had achieved at least an equal voice in the body for the 'conservative' elements in the League, and in this way probably hoped to counter the influence wielded by the Seize.

For the first half of 1589 Mayenne's relations with the capital were excellent. Just four days after the creation of the Conseil Général he felt secure enough, after such a controversial stroke, to undertake a brief journey to Rouen.[25] After his investiture as lieutenant-general on 4 March he spent the majority of the year with his army. Meanwhile, in Paris the Bureau held weekly General Assemblies, uniting parlémentaries, colonels of the quartiers and other civic notables to discuss the city's and the League's problems. All seemed to go smoothly between the leader and the capital. A memoir from the Bureau de la Ville to the prédicateurs after the royalist capture of Senlis directed them to preach against the sedition being spread against the leader of the League by those "who only judge affairs by their success". These slanders, said the directive, were being spread by spies of the enemy, purposely trying to promote discord and divide the League movement.[26]

On a closer examination, however, it becomes obvious that this apparent harmony could only be transitory. In spite of Mayenne's precautions, the *Seize* exerted a predominant influence in the *Conseil Général de l'Union*. As well, most members of the *Bureau de la Ville*, including the *prévôt des marchands* and *échevins*, openly espoused the cause of the *Seize*.[27] Taxation in the city increased alarmingly,[28] and measures against the moderate Leaguers -- called *Politiques* -- became more frequent as the *Seize* grew more confident in their power and had greater need for the money to be gained by confiscation of their opponents' goods.

Tension also rose between the *Bureau* and the *Parlement*. Most of the judges remaining in the rump *Parlement* were of a moderate inclination, disposed to leniency in dealing with the charges of treason levelled at many of the enemies of the *Seize*. This latter group, however, expected the court to apply ultra-Catholic standards to its cases and to convict or exonerate as dictated by the *Bureau* or by itself. The frequent acquittal of accused enemies of the League infuriated the radicals; and a longstanding jurisdictional dispute between the *Bureau* and the *Parlement* further exacerbated the growing enmity between the two institutions. The *Parlement* traditionally was endowed with the supervision of provisions, sanitation, censorship, and other administrative tasks in the city of Paris. These rights had been granted and confirmed by previous monarchs as privileges of the court. In the time of the League the *Bureau de la Ville* simply appropriated these functions and denied the *Parlement* any jurisdiction over Paris. The reluctance of *Parlement* to work in conjunction with the *Bureau* may partially be ascribed to the renewal of this old antagonism.[29]

At one point in his *Mémoires d'Estat* Villeroy commented that

"Paris is a docile city, easily led by a few."[30] Relative to the pattern of political control in the capital from 1589 to 1591 this observation holds a great deal of validity. The *Seize*, even including the active supporters in each of the *quartiers*, composed only a fraction of the city's populace. It is virtually impossible to determine the extent of unrest directed against the regime of the *Seize*, partly because of the effective use of terror to suppress opposition. Moderates had few opportunities to voice their opinions, and the presses of the city were watched closely for pamphlets attacking the *Seize*.[31] In addition, the *prédicateurs* were largely on the side of the radicals, a support at least as valuable as the many circulating radical pamphlets. Only in cases where the *Seize* actually took action against the moderates is it possible to catch glimpses of popular discontent. Otherwise, aside from the frequently mentioned mob support enjoyed by the radicals, the allegiance of most of the capital's citizens is barely discernible until the fall of the *Seize*.

The *Seize* did not begin serious efforts against their opponents until the summer of 1589. Two presidents of the *Chambre des Comptes*, who had voiced criticism of the *Seize*, were among those arrested in July for withholding funds from the coffers of the League.[32] The annual municipal elections, held each August to replace two of the four *échevins*, equally proved a victory for the *Seize*. The incumbents, both *Seize* members, were returned with near unanimity.[33] The *Parlement* attempted to resist the progress of the *Seize*; on 11 September 1589 an *arrêt* forbade summary confiscations and arrests, as practised by the radicals.[34] Mayenne was in Paris when this *arrêt* passed, and so long as he remained it appears to have succeeded in quieting the *Seize*. But the moderates did not have the organization and unity of the radicals, nor did they exert a signficant influence in either the Bureau or the Conseil Général. Shortly after Mayenne rejoined his army the Seize resumed their offensive.

On 21 October 1589 La Chapelle-Marteau, the prévôt des marchands, entered the Palais de Justice with an armed troop and demanded that the judges deliberate, in his presence, the case of Sergeant Le Gay. Le Gay was an adherent of the Seize who had been convicted in the Châtelet, one of the chambers of the Parlement, of the murder of a councillor of the Chambre des Comptes.[35] The magistrates gave way under the intimidation of the prévôt and quickly decided upon the acquittal of Le Gay. The precedent set by this successful interference in the proceedings of the court was duly noted and repeated by the Seize in the ensuing years. Only four days later the Bureau requested that the Parlement reach a 'favorable' conclusion in another case that was before the court.[36] The success of this and other interventions effectively transferred to the Bureau de la Ville or the Seize, from the Parlement, the ultimate authority in matters of justice in Paris.

Summary arrest, incarceration and even murder were the tactics employed against the moderates in the fall of 1589. L'Estoile recorded an incident in which Emmonot, one of the Seize later hanged by Mayenne, used the factional struggle as an excuse to murder a personal enemy. Such excesses, L'Estoile noted sardonically, "not only went unpunished but were approved and praised as being proof of a true zeal for the Catholic religion."[37] On 13 November Mayenne ordered the Conseil Général to release a merchant of Cambrai from detention in the Bastille.[38] This was accomplished, but only grudgingly and only after several remonstrances to the duke asking him to reconsider. Undaunted by Mayenne's obvious disapproval of their methods, the *Seize* pressed on against suspected *Politiques*.

Nicolas de Blanc Mesnil, a respected president in the *Parlement*, was charged with conspiracy to surrender the city of Paris to Henri de Navarre.[39] He was alledgedly the leader of a *Politique* plot to conduct Navarre's army through one of the city gates on the night of 1-2 November. The royalist troops had appeared before the gate as planned and only the timely arrival of Mayenne's forces had driven away Henri's army and ensured the safety of the capital. The conspirators in Paris were immediately captured and many were put to death, with the consent of the *Parlement*.[40] Blanc Mesnil was arrested and held in prison. The *Seize* demanded his immediate execution "for plotting to deliver his fellow citizens into the hands of their enemies,"[41] but Mayenne intervened, much to the disgust of the *Seize*, and delegated several judges of moderate inclination to hear the case.[42] The trial dragged on for several months before the judged handed down the expected acquittal. Blanc Mesnil thereafter escaped from Paris and joined the *Parlement* at Tours. This was one of the few cases in 1589 in which the *Seize* was thwarted. It was also the first important instance where Mayenne aligned himself with the moderates against the *Seize*.

Henri de Navarre's attempt to surprise Paris in early November 1589 had heightened the existing tensions between moderates and ultra-Catholics within the capital. Possibly in the hope of obtaining aid in the conflict, the *Seize* made an appeal to Mayenne. This appeal deserves some attention since it is the first detailed list of demands made by the *Seize*, demands which were reiterated several times in the next two years without significant change. On 29 November Jean Yon, Rector of the University of Paris, presented to the duc de Mayenne twenty-two articles which outlined the platform represented by the Seize.[43] The document suggests that the radicals were growing disenchanted with the military leadership provided by Mayenne, for several of the articles were requests for more troops within the city and a greater effort to expel the royalist units operating in the Ile-de-France. In addition, Mayenne was warned -- rather indiscreetly -- to be wary "of those around you who, by deceitful counsel or other means, are the cause of the poor state of our [the League's] affairs."

More significantly, many of the requests were clearly related to the struggle of the Seize against the moderate Leaguers. The second article asked that "all those who try to cool the good-will and zeal of the Catholics or retard in any manner the collection of taxes be promptly arrested and punished." As well, "all the houses of those of the opposite party [the Politiques]" should be confiscated and used to pay the troops of the League. The removal of suspect colonels and captains of the Parisian militia, "in order to replace them with others more zealous and devoted", was also requested. "All those who speak favorably of the King of Navarre" should incur severe punishment, according to another article of the proposals. Such provisions were barely-disguised bids aimed at securing Mayenne's endorsement for action against the Politiques. Two articles relating directly to the Seize also were included. The first proposed that a body of sixteen co-adjutors be elected, one from each quartier, to advise the échevins and prévôt; this may have been an attempt by the Seize to obtain official recognition in the government of Paris. The second was a proposal that was to be repeated in every succeeding remonstrance to Mayenne, a request for the creation of a special chamber "composed of capable, zealous and irreproachable Catholics . . . for the punishment of traitors, heretics and any others acting prejudicially to the Holy Union of Catholics." This 'special chamber', reminiscent of the Chambre Ardente from the reign of Henri II, remained the principal demand of the Seize in any negotiations with Mayenne. Its realisation would have given the group complete ascendency over their enemies, enabling them totally to bypass the Parlement, which still was reluctant to follow their dictates, in the trial of suspects. The beleaguered Politiques could scarcely have survived the onslaught had the Seize achieved such powers.

Mayenne's response to these demands, reportedly polite and positive,[44] could scarcely have been enthusiastic. Granting the requests would have left the Seize the complete masters of Paris, and a sample of their methods had been tasted in the executions following the discovery of the November plot to surrender Paris. Mayenne terminated his reply to Jean Yon with the protest that "action more than promises would show everyone how just he [Mayenne] considered the proposals to be." In one of his few decisive moments Mayenne did indeed underline his words with action; several weeks later he abolished the Conseil Général de l'Union.

The proposals of Jean Yon were not the only stimulus for Mayenne's decision to strike at the power of the Seize. In December 1589 the Spanish ambassador was increasing pressure on Mayenne to declare Philip II Protector of the kingdom of France.[45] There was great support for this move in the Conseil Général, but Mayenne was reluctant to give sanction to full-scale Spanish intervention. Although he himself received money from Spain, this was only to help him meet the demanding payroll of his army. To make Philip Protector would imply a much greater dependency upon his assistance and also would furnish the Spanish monarch with a blank cheque for intervention in French affairs. Mayenne sought the opinions of the Parlement and his councillors, notably Villeroy, who seconded his aversion to increased Spanish involvement. They advised him that such an acceptance would endanger his position at a time when "he alone should have complete authority and there should be no chief of the party of the Union aside from him."[46] Acting upon this advice, which coincided with his own inclinations, Mayenne declared "the pope would not be pleased if anyone but himself was made Protector of the [Catholic] religion in France," and deferred any decision on the matter until the papal Legate, who had already reached Lyon, arrived in Paris. Finally, "since there was a proclaimed King [Charles X] of whom he was the lieutenant" and since "the Conseil Général represents a republican form which is not customary in this kingdom," Mayenne dissolved the Conseil Général de l'Union and replaced it with a Conseil d'État.[47]

Apparently a harsh blow, the loss of the Conseil Général did not have a seriously deleterious effect upon the actual power of the Seize. They continued to dominate Paris and the Bureau de la Ville. Mayenne's move had, however, openly demonstrated his antipathy to the radicals. The relatively amicable relations of 1589 disappeared in the course of 1590 after Mayenne's preference for the moderate Leaguers was made plain. The Seize continued negotiations with Spain, but covertly now. Villeroy, among others, suspected these communications but could do little about them.[48] On 11 January 1590 an agreement between Mendoza and "the League of France" was concluded at Paris. The draft treaty contained acceptance of the demands made of Mayenne in the previous December but the name of Mayenne did not appear on the treaty.[49] Philip was proclaimed Protector of the Crown of France and promised money to the League in return for the right to garrison several towns in Picardy and the promise of French aid once Navarre had been defeated. No names were mentioned, but it is safe to assume that "*ceulx de la Ligue*" were actually the *Seize*.

Mayenne took precautions against the *Seize* in 1590 and was generally successful in curtailing any challenge to or usurpation of his authority. The Estates-General, where the *Seize* hoped to dominate, was repeatedly postponed for a variety of transparent excuses.[50] On 21 March the *Conseil d'État* forced the release of an unpopular tax farmer, François de Vigny, from the Bastille.[51] Judging from the numerous protests against this ruling, the *Seize* must have considered Vigny's conviction an important one,[52] but despite the appeals, the decision of the *Conseil d'État* remained, and Vigny was allowed to leave Paris. In August Mayenne ordered the postponement of the municipal elections until his arrival in Paris, claiming that a fair decision could not be reached until the siege of the capital was raised and the threatening royalist forces dispersed. The vehement objections by members of the *Seize* against this interference with the traditional liberties of Paris were unavailing.[53] The elections did not occur until 17 October when, under the supervision of the duc de Mayenne, the electors chose the candidate endorsed by the lieutenant-general as the new *prévôt*.

A persistent reminder to the radicals of Mayenne's distrust was the garrison of *lansquenents* which he had installed in the city. Originally introduced before the siege of 1589, the *lansquenets* remained in Paris after the crisis was over. The city was responsible for the provisions and payment of these troops, who were liable to go on rampages when they felt they were being ill-treated by the *Bureau*.[54] Repeated requests could not move Mayenne to withdraw the mercenaries. In answer to a warning of the tensions within Paris, his only comment was that he trusted implicitly in the good citizens of Paris *and his lansquenets* to deal with any violence.[55]

However, in spite of Mayenne's success in frustrating the extension of their influence, Paris was still very much under the control of the *Seize*. The siege of 1590 provided a vivid demonstration of this fact. As the royalist artillery maintained a steady pressure against the defenders, the vehemence of the radicals' refusal to surrender inspired the citizens to greater efforts in their resistance. Although food prices skyrocketed and thousands succumbed to starvation, the *Seize* continued to exhort the Parisians to further sacrifices for the religion. "The only thing cheap in Paris were the sermons . . ., in which the *prédicateurs* tried to convince people that to eat the flesh of dogs and to die of hunger was pleasing to God," was only one of L'Estoile's many bitter remarks on the hardships of the siege.[56] By sealing off the city, the siege intensified the conflicts between the moderates and the *Seize*, who invariably emerged the victors of the clashes. The imminence of the danger was employed as an excuse to increase measures against those whose allegiance to the League was suspect. Proscriptions multiplied, apparently justified by 'plots' such as an attempted assassination of the *prévôt*.[57] Several citizens were drowned in the

Seine in early June "for having said that it would be wise to make peace with the king of Navarre."[58]

After the siege, Mayenne's popularity among virtually all segments of Paris opinion decreased. Although his sympathies apparently lay with the moderates, he had done little for their cause and had not taken any substantial action against the *Seize*. The latter group was resentful of his repeated obstructions. In addition, Mayenne continued to procrastinate with regard to a definitive date for the convocation of the Estates-General. The death of the cardinal de Bourbon on 8 May 1590 had increased the urgency for this meeting; a decision would have to be made soon. The old Cardinal's death sharpened the differences between those willing to give the Spanish a preponderant influence in the creation of a king and those wanting to seek a purely French solution.[59] The *Seize* advocated the former stance whereas most of the moderates -- including Mayenne -- preferred the latter.

The leader of the League also possessed an uninspiring military record. In September 1589 Mayenne was defeated in a series of cavalry skirmishes at Arques. On 14 March 1590, in the only large-scale battle of the League period, his forces were totally routed by Henri de Navarre at Ivry. Shortly after this loss, Mayenne watched helplessly as Navarre lay siege to Paris. From May to September Mayenne was unable -- or unwilling, as many Parisians began to think -- to take action against the besieging army. At first his letters to the beleaguered city, promising the immediate destruction of Navarre's army by the duke of Parma and himself, were read aloud to the people of Paris by the *prévôt*. However, the expected relief was postponed again and again so that finally the *prévot* refrained from reading Mayenne's missives to the crowd, for fear of disheartening the citizens.[60] Only Parma's last-minute arrival prevented the fall of Paris. Mayenne had also proven unsuccessful in the other military tasks expected of him. Navarre's forces captured the towns of northern France in rapid succession and, in spite of the raising of the siege of Paris in September 1590, a tight blockade remained around the capital until 1593.[61] Regular commerce disappeared, and supplies only entered Paris with great difficulty and at great cost. The Seize, obviously with little faith in Mayenne's abilities, suggested that "if the duc de Mayenne does not feel strong enough . . . he should promptly seek assistance from the Catholic potentates . . ., particularly the King of Spain."[62]

Additional complaints against the leader were intimated by a delegation from the Seize sent to Mayenne's camp outside Paris shortly after the relief of the capital in 1590. He was asked "to prosecute the war overtly, without any idea of a pact of any kind with our common enemy."[63] This was a reference to the negotiations between Mayenne and Henri de Navarre, which had been held intermittently since 1589. The apparent aim of the discussions, from Mayenne's standpoint, was to convince Henri to convert, but more likely both sides used them as a delaying tactic in an attempt to gain a military advantage over their opponent.[64] Nonetheless, knowledge of these suspicious contacts with the enemy made the Seize even more inclined to distrust Mayenne. Mayenne's agent in these talks, Nicolas de Neuville, seigneur de Villeroy, was also the subject of severe criticism. It was asked that such men be removed from the Conseil d'État and that the Conseil Général de l'Union be reestablished to protect the interests of the League.[65]

Characteristically, Mayenne politely listened to these proposals and then dismissed the supplicants without making a commitment. However, the *Seize* were by then well aware of Mayenne's reluctance to accede to their requests and "although constrained to accept the permanence of the loss of the *Conseil Général*, they did not stop the pursuit of their designs."[66]

A move by Mayenne to further ensure himself and the *Conseil d'Etat* of the governmental powers of the kingdom indicates the extent to which he feared the encroachment of the *Seize* upon his prerogatives. The *Bureau de la Ville* revived the use of the old royal formula '*De Par le Roy*', for many orders issued in the summer and fall of 1590.[67] This usage had been dropped in early 1589, making its revival in 1590 difficult to explain, particularly after the death of the Leaguer King Charles X. Perhaps the formula was simply to add more prestige to the *Bureau*'s decrees during the difficult period of the siege; more likely it was to illustrate that the *Bureau* was not dependent upon the wishes of Mayenne. Whatever the intent of this move, Mayenne's response, not forthcoming until 2 January 1591, was to forbid such a practice. Henceforth *all* official correspondence -- the scope of this term was not specified -- had to be countersigned by a secretary of state.[68] In this manner Mayenne apparently hoped to contain the political pretensions of the *Seize*.

The *Seize*, however, refused to be deterred from pressing their demands. Early in February 1591 they once more petitioned Mayenne to restore the *Conseil Général de l'Union* and to allow the establishment of a special chamber for the trial of heretics and those accused of aiding Henri de Navarre. Authorization was also requested for the immediate confiscation of the goods of known Politiques.[69] Mayenne still could not acquiesce in these demands, which rapidly would have resulted in the extermination of the moderate Leaguers and the unbridled dominance of the Seize in Paris. He did grant one concession to the city: on 12 February a garrison of 4,000 Spanish and Neapolitan troops took up residence there.[70] This long-solicited move undoubtedly was made as a result of Mayenne's own inability to defend the capital properly, but he probably hoped that it would also ease the tensions between himself and the Seize.

If appeasement had been one of his motives in introducing the Spanish contingent, any hopes Mayenne may have entertained for pacification were destroyed by the resumption of the Seize's agitation for the proscription of Politiques. In his sermon of 24 March Jean Boucher, one of the most vocal prédicateurs, preached death for all enemies of the League, among which group he included many parlémentaires.[71] Hostility within the city very nearly erupted into a full-scale clash, forcing Mayenne's hurried return from Soissons, where he had been negotiating for Spanish subsidy, to compose the differences. Indicative of his lack of confidence in the city and perhaps a sense of his own unpopularity there, Mayenne chose to remain at the Château de Vincennes, on the outskirts of the city. On 28 March he met with representatives from the Bureau to discuss the problems of Paris.[72] Entering the meetings in hopes of conciliation, Mayenne ended by giving approval to many of the requests of the Seize. "In only two days," he wrote to his advisor Jeannin, "I have composed matters and broken divisions and plots so successfully that the city has never been in better condition or more in my devotion."[73]

In fact, the results were much less encouraging. Mayenne sanctioned the exile of over a dozen *parlémentaires*, and an undetermined number of government officials were excluded from their offices.[74] Mayenne's policy of balance was beginning to crack. He had been driven to approve the purge of the officials named by the *Seize* in the face of the threat of much wider, unauthorized arrests which would occur if he refused permission. The *Seize* were becoming far too powerful to be held in check by the moderate Leaguers of Paris. By authorizing the purge Mayenne perhaps still hoped to placate the *Seize* and keep peace in the League's most important city. But Villeroy decried Mayenne's acquiescence to the *Seize* as a betrayal of the interests of the League,[75] while the *Seize*, far from mollified by this concession, grew bolder and more assertive. Optimistic assurances such as Mayenne's letter to the *Chambre des Comptes* -- "the men were removed for their safety and protection, not to damage their reputations"[76] -- convinced few; the Conference at Vincennes and the subsequent exile and arrest of many moderates was a clear victory of the *Seize* over Mayenne.

It is superfluous to follow the power struggle of the *Seize* against the moderates and, to a large extent, against Mayenne throughout the spring and summer of 1591. The familiar pattern of demands for more authority to deal with the *Politique* 'traitors' and enhance the power of the radical group in control, along with Mayenne's refusals and obstruction, was repeated. The Estates-General, scheduled for Reims in June, were cancelled when the majority of the deputies who actually arrived for the convocation proved to be adherants of the *Seize*.[77] In the municipal elections in August two moderate candidates were elected *échevins* but shortly after, on pressure from the *Seize*, these elections were declared void and two, more radical, candidates were successful.[78] The Seize were becoming more powerful and more openly critical of Mayenne's leadership.[79] Finally in the autumn they became convinced that if any action were to be taken it would have to be without the knowledge or consent of the titular leader. The Parlement, the bastion of the Politiques which frequently had proven its opposition to the Seize, became the first target.

The Parlement's acquittal of François Brigard proved the issue which triggered the confrontation. Formerly a procureur de la ville and a trusted member of the Seize, Brigard was arrested in February 1591 on charges of conspiracy with the enemy. The Seize placed great emphasis on the conviction of Brigard, but the Parlement, in spite of the pressure, proceeded at a leisurely pace in its deliberations. In July the Seize closed the doors of the Parlement for one week to demonstrate their concern over the length of the trial and to show their power over the court, but this attempt at suasion had little effect.[80] On 30 October the court granted Brigard his freedom on the grounds of lack of evidence.[81] The Seize immediately met and decided to take action against the Parlement for this travesty of justice. A secret Council of Ten was elected to direct operations against the opponents of the Seize. The tribunal, as it was called, became operative almost immediately.[82] On 15 November Barnabé Brisson, First President of the Parlement, was arrested and brought before the tribunal to answer to charges of conspiracy with the enemy. After a semblance of a trial, at which three members of the Council of Ten presided, Brisson was removed to an adjoining room and summarily hanged. Two other presidents of the Parlement, Claude Larcher and Émile Tardif, were arrested, tried and executed in similar fashion the same day.[83]

By this move the Seize had hoped to break the resistance of the Parlement to their aspirations and gain a freer hand in proceedings against Politiques. And indeed, the Seize began almost at once to implement their plans. A proscription list was prepared,[84] and the Conseil d'Etat was solicited to grant permission for a Chambre Ardente.[85] In addition, the Seize sent a delegation to Mayenne, who was conducting the siege of Laon, to explain the murders of the parlémentaires and, quite audaciously, to ask his approval of their actions.

Mayenne was now forced to commit himself. He had either to call the murderers to account or let them go unpunished. If the latter, he effectively conceded control of Paris to the Seize; if the former, he might ensure the rise of moderate Leaguers to ascendancy in the capital. The attack on the leading members of the Parlement was such a blatant challenge to Mayenne's authority and to moderate opinion within the League that little room remained for compromise or conciliation. The Seize, by their continued 'offensive' after 15 November as well as by the actual murders, had clearly demonstrated their disinclination to return to the old state of contrived balance. They were demonstrably weary of the continued obstruction to their complete dominance over Paris. Faced with a decision, Mayenne, typically, temporized. He apparently was impervious to the letters from people in Paris begging him to come and destroy the Seize.[86] Popular opinion in the capital had veered decisively away from the Seize after the brutal murders. Even the mob, which usually applauded the radicals for their measures against suspected Politiques, did not welcome the display of the parlémentaires' bodies on 17 November and was not stirred by the harangues detailing the crimes of Brisson and his colleagues.[87] But Mayenne remained in Laon for ten days pondering, according to Villeroy, "diverse considerations", undoubtedly attempting to ascertain which group, the Seize or the moderates, had the most to offer him in terms of support for his leadership. Finally, out of "apprehension de son particulier", he decided to go to Paris and crush the dangerous Seize.[88]

However, for five days after his arrival in Paris on 28 November he continued to delay the expected punishment of the Seize. He passed his time in meetings with representatives of the two parties. On 1 December Bussy Le Clerc was intimidated into the surrender of the Bastille, giving Mayenne the most powerful fortified position in Paris. Three days later, "on his own authority," he condemned "nine of the most guilty of the Seize" to death for the murders of Brisson, Larcher and Tardif.[89] Four of the nine were arrested and immediately executed; the others were able to escape. The decisive step had been taken. Mayenne now set about reorganizing the government and allegiance of Paris.

His first action was to abolish the Seize. "It is very expressly prohibited for any group or persons . . ., even those formerly called the Council of Sixteen, to have any more assemblies or deliberate on or treat with any matter whatsoever."[90] This was followed by the stipulation that all municipal officials in the city had to take a new oath of allegiance to the League between the hands of Mayenne. Those who refused to comply within three days forfeited their positions.[91] Another oath, to be sworn by all the inhabitants of Paris, bound the adherents "to live and die in the Catholic Union, in friendship and peace with one another", to "render complete obedience, fidelity and service" to Mayenne and to "respect the court of Parlement and obey our magistrates and superiors."[92] Apparently, however, these oaths were not entirely successful in reestablishing harmony within the Parisian League. On 14 January 1592 the Bureau issued an order which was by then quite familiar; any communication with those supporting Henri de Navarre was forbidden.[93] In addition, a lengthy memoir submitted to Navarre in February 1592 suggests a fairly sizable defection of League officials to the royalists. The unidentified author cautioned Henri against assigning posts to the large number of supplicants leaving the League. Most of them, he argued, would probably shift allegiances again if Navarre's fortunes were to decline.[94]

The executions of 4 December and the abolition of the Seize did, however, temporarily assauge the quarrels of Paris. The moderates now held the upper hand. Many colonels of the militia, who had exerted a strong political influence when the Seize dominated, were replaced, and a ruling was issued which strictly limited the roles of the colonels and captains to militia business.[95] In this same municipal act some of the more radical members of the Bureau de la Ville were denied their seats at meetings, for which a formal list of those entitled to attend was published. When one of the échevins left the Hôtel de Ville to take a seat in the Parlement, a moderate Leaguer won the subsequent election, which was conducted in the presence of Mayenne.[96] Paris remained peaceful under its new moderate government in the first months of 1592. Even in the field the League managed to achieve some success with the long defense of Rouen against Henri de Navarre and the raising of that siege by Parma and Mayenne in February 1592.

This new-found tranquility did not signify any greater unity within the League. An Italian cardinal in France, writing to the pope, noticed great pressures upon and within the League. "The cities", he wrote, "do not obey the duc de Mayenne, nor do they sustain the war, hoarding their resources to preserve themselves." The princes of the League were all pursuing divergent interests and most dangerous of all, wrote the cardinal, were the Spanish, whose insistence on tangible results from all the aid which Philip had sent to France posed an almost unbearable strain upon the League.[97]

Another major problem confronted the League at this time. Around Henri de Navarre there had grown in 1590 and 1591 a faction, generally called the Third Party. This was a predominantly clerical group headed by the cardinal de Vendôme -- who became the cardinal de Bourbon after the death of his uncle, the League's Charles X -- and the cardinal de Lenoncourt. It drew a large following from among Navarre's Catholic supporters. The aim of the Third Party was to concentrate on Navarre in an effort to convince him to convert. At one point Lenoncourt and Bourbon even called an assembly of the Catholic bishops to instruct Henri, although this move was censured by the pope.[98] The basic difference between this Third Party and the _Politiques_ around Henri de Navarre was that the Third Party was prepared to accept someone other than Navarre if he continued to adhere to his religion. Various Catholic relatives of Navarre, including the young cardinal de Bourbon himself, were advanced as possible alternate candidates for the throne, and although none succeeded in gaining extensive popular support, Mayenne feared that the Third Party would serve only to further disunite the Catholics. In the event, something of the sort occured, and significant numbers of moderate Leaguers began to adhere to the solution proferred by the cardinal de Bourbon. Mayenne urged the pope to quash the movement,[99] but despite direct orders from Rome, Bourbon and his colleagues remained in attendance upon Henri de Navarre.

As well as these troubles in the League in general, it became apparent as 1592 advanced that the situation in Paris was not propitious for the continuation of the movement there, nor, more particularly, for Mayenne himself. As was happening elsewhere, the League in Paris was beginning to fall apart. The years of hardship, battle and internal squabbling had taken their toll. Mayenne soon found that the moderate Leaguers whom he had established in Paris were almost as exacting in their demands as had been the Seize. The habitual round of lists of demands submitted to Mayenne, polite noncommital replies, proscription of the Parisian government's opponents and requests for the Estates-General resumed. But this time, the power in Paris was lobbying for conciliation with Navarre rather than an increased effort in the war. In comparison with the events of 1591, however, Paris was relatively docile throughout much of 1592. The Seize still existed, meeting clandestinely to plot the overthrow of the moderates or to attempt to get aid from the Spanish, but their numbers were too few and the Bureau de la Ville watched too diligently for their plotting to constitute any real danger.[100]

In October 1592 a crisis arose in Paris which finally forced Mayenne into calling the Estates-General. Throughout the year there was a growing movement within the capital to appeal to Henri de Navarre to convert. On 24 October Mayenne hastily returned to Paris after hearing rumours of public meetings of Politiques discussing this move. Indeed, a week previous to this the Parlement had chosen two of its members to carry a proposal of conversion to Navarre's camp.[101] On 26 October the Politiques met in a large assembly at the Hôtel de Ville and decided upon a similar delegation of their own. Mayenne's appearance in the capital did not suffice to halt these proceedings. The Chambre des Comptes voted unanimously, in the presence of the duke, to encourage the conversion of Henri de Navarre.[102]

Mayenne could no longer control this movement for negotiation. He was forced to play the only card remaining to him, which could, temporarily at least, prevent the collapse of the League by its dalliance with Navarre. On 27 November 1592 he called the Estates-General to convene in Paris in the following month.

Mayenne's indecision, particularly with regard to Paris, had allowed the divisions within the League to take strong root. There was little that could have been done to draw the League princes closer to the dictates of the leader or to eradicate regional separatism, but a solution for Paris might have been possible in 1589 and perhaps later, if Mayenne had come out strongly in favour of one of the Parisian factions. However, he had failed to learn the lesson of Catherine de Medici in the earlier Wars of Religion. Like the former Queen Mother, he tried to maintain an expedient equilibrium between the factions while he himself balanced in the middle. The lack of consistency in his dealings with the rival groups in Paris eventually lost him any support that could have been forthcoming from either faction. By failing to give his support to the moderates, whose position he tempermentally favoured, Mayenne alienated this group from the outset. At the same time the restraints placed upon the Seize only incurred continuing opposition within that group as well.

Not only did Mayenne refrain for as long as possible from taking steps that would weaken either group, he actually took measures to maintain the strength of the weaker party. This continued even after the climax of the factional struggle in late 1591. In November 1592, shortly after the stance taken by the Politiques, Mayenne intervened in the municipal elections. When his candidates lost, he exercised the royal prerogative of nullifying the elections and simply appointed his two candidates. One of them was a moderate, the other a well-known member of the Seize.[103] Even at this late date he apparently hoped to counterbalance the discontent of the Politiques with the very different type of discontent of the Seize.

The longer Mayenne allowed the struggles to continue and the League to drift inconclusively, the stronger the factional rivalry grew and the greater the successes of the common enemy. Mayenne's position became increasingly precarious. Again like Catherine de Medici, Mayenne soon found that "negative politics" -- playing one faction against the other -- can only be an expedient. Failure to secure his own base of support underlaid the perpetual weakness of his position and was ultimately responsible for the failure of the League.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1] Beame, "The Development of Politique Thought," is an excellent analysis of the dominant ideas of the *Politiques*.

[2] "Mémoires et Instructions" to the League's ambassadors in Rome, 25 May 1589, *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 320.

[3] For the duc de Lorraine, his involvement in the League and his attempts to get the crown see Louis Davillé, *Les Prétensions de Charles III, duc de Lorraine, à la Couronne de France* (Paris, 1909). The genealogical charts are discussed in Chapter I.

[4] *Ibid.*, 230-254.

[5] The exploits of Nemours in Burgundy are described in Drouot, *Mayenne et la Bourgogne*, I, 437ff.

[6] "Mémoires et Instructions baillés par le duc de Nemours au baron de Tenissé, pour traiter avec le duc de Mayenne, à ce qu'il trouvât bon qu'il fut élu Roy," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, V, 183-188.

[7] This statement is based on Mayenne's actions and negotiations over the matter of selecting a new monarch, which will be discussed further below in Chapter Four.

[8] L'Estoile, *Journal de L'Estoile pour le règne de Henri IV*, ed. L.-R. Lefèvre (Paris, 1948), I, 463. Hereafter all references to L'Estoile's *Journal* for the reign of Henri IV will refer to the first volume of this edition.

[9] de Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, VIII, 632.

[10] There are numerous instances of Mayenne and the *Bureau de la Ville* of Paris asking Mercoeur to allow salt to pass through Brittany. See, for example, *Bureau de la Ville* to Mayenne, 29 January 1592, *Registres*, X, 221-222, in which the Parisians begged Mayenne to intercede with Mercoeur on their behalf. Mayenne did, but repeated pleas of this nature indicate that Mercoeur did not bother to comply.

[11] Bernard, *Procès-Verbaux*, 7.

[12] de Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, VII, 806.

[13] See Henri de L'Épinois, *La Ligue et les Papes* (Paris, 1886), 501ff.

[14] Quoted in Édouard Fremy, Diplomates du temps de la Ligue (Paris, 1881), 135.

[15] For example, Guy Eder, seigneur de La Fontenelle, a Breton noble notorious for his savagry, terrorized the neighborhood of Vannes for years as the 'lieutenant' of Mercoeur, who actually had no control over him. Jean Lorédan, La Fontenelle, Seigneur de la Ligue, 1572-1602 (Paris, 1926), is a weak but readable biography of the man.

[16] A.J. Grant, The French Monarchy, 1483-1789 (Cambrdige, 1901), is still a reliable account of the development of French political absolutism and the disruption caused by the Wars of Religion.

[17] For the League in Burgundy see Drouot, Mayenne et la Bourgogne. The Mémoires of the self-constituted leader of the resistance to the League in Burgundy, Guillaume de Saulx, seigneur de Tavannes, are in vol. VIII of Michaud and Poujoulat.

[18] There are numerous letters of Mayenne to his Burgundian supporters in Correspondance, passim.

[19] Baumgartner, "Political Thought of the Radicals of Paris", is the most recent and detailed study of the ideas of the Seize.

[20] The use of terms such as 'radical' and 'moderate' is, I believe, justified in the context of the Parisian disputes during the League period. For my purposes, 'radical' will be employed to indicate that group of people who were either members of or in sympathy with the Seize, since this body most clearly represented absolute conformity to religious orthodoxy at the same time as advocating greater changes in the monarchy than other Leaguers were prepared to accept. The 'moderates', on the other hand, were more flexible in their attitude to Navarre, although they must not be confused with the Politiques. Although some moderates may also have been Politiques -- that is, they were prepared to accept Navarre even without his conversion in order to restore civil peace -- generally the moderates were in the League by choice, because they could not accept a heretic king.

[21] The extent of the influence of Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador in Paris until 1591, is open to question. De Lamar Jensen in Diplomacy and Dogmatism, claims that Mendoza was the strongest influence over the policies and actions of the Seize, conceeding to Guise little power over the group. Ascoli, however, in "'The Sixteen' and the Paris League", maintains that, although Guise did not manipulate the Seize, neither did Mendoza, although the latter did confer with the Seize frequently. Ascoli's opinion is also held by Alfred Morel-Fatio in "D. Bernardino de Mendoza", Bulletin Hispanique, VIII (1906), 20-70.

[22] Mendoza to Philip II, 13 October 1588, Croze, Les Guises, II, 368.

[23] Nicolas de Lezeau, "De la Religion Catholique en France," Archives Curieuses, XIV, 57. Palma Cayet, 101, gives a list of members

of the Council of Forty and, on page 103, a list of the members added by Mayenne.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Paul Robiquet, Histoire municipale de Paris (Paris, 1904), II, 530.

[26] "Mémoire à messieurs les prédicateurs de Paris pour advertir et exhorter le peuple continuellement en leurs prédications . . . pour la gloire de Dieu et conservation de ladicte ville et le bien de la Saintte Union des Catholiques," Registres, IX, 358-359.

[27] Michel de La Chapelle-Marteau, the prévôt, and the four échevins -- Roland, Compans, Cotteblanche and Des Prez -- had all assumed their offices on 18 May 1588, after the Day of the Barricades, in which the Seize gained control of the municipal administration.

[28] See Registres, IX and X, passim, for the frequent levies.

[29] J.H. Shennan, The Parlement of Paris (London, 1968), 86-100, provides a discussion of the Parlement's rights over Paris and the Ile-de-France.

[30] Nicolas de Neuville, seigneur de Villeroy, Mémoires d'Éstat, vol. XI of Michaud and Poujoulat, 161.

[31] Nonetheless, a certain number of pamphlets did circulate, some smuggled into the city and some printed on Parisian presses. L'Estoile, particularly in his entries for 1591, mentions many of these.

[32] Registres, IX, 394-395.

[33] Ibid., 428n.

[34] This arrêt is mentioned in Ascoli, "'The Sixteen'", 361.

[35] L'Estoile, 26, describes the case of Le Gay.

[36] Registres, IX, 490-491.

[37] L'Estoile, 32.

[38] Mayenne to Bureau de la Ville, 13 November 1589, Registres, IX, 514.

[39] L'Estoile, 28-29.

[40] Ascoli, "'The Sixteen'", 376.

[41] "Response de la ville à une lettre escrite de la cour par une prince en faveur du president de Blanc Mesnil," Registres, IX, 543.

[42] See the remonstrance made by the *Bureau* to these judges, *ibid.*, 533-544.

[43] "Articles Remontres à monseigneur le duc de Mayenne, lieutenant général de l'état et couronne de France, par M. le recteur de l'Université de Paris," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, III, 534-539.

[44] "Substance de la response faite par mondit Seigneur," *ibid.*, 539.

[45] The Spanish proposals are in Palma Cayet, 188-191 and in Villeroy, *Mémoires d'Éstat*, 146.

[46] Palma Cayet, 190.

[47] *Ibid.*, 191.

[48] Villeroy, *Mémoires d'Éstat*, 147.

[49] "Sommaire des articles accordez, entre les ambassadeurs de Roy d'Espagne et la Ligue de France, a Paris l'unziesme de Janvier 1590," Thomas Rymer, ed., *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae et Cujuscunque Generis Acta Publica* (London, 1704-1726), XVI, 33-34. There is another copy of this treaty in Jean Dumont, ed., *Corps universel diplomatique du droit des gens . . .* (Amsterdam, 1726-1731), V, 481.

[50] See below, Chapter Four.

[51] *Registres*, IX, 632-633. Vigny's arrest is noted in L'Estoile, 92.

[52] For an example of these protests see *Registres*, IX, 635-639.

[53] The arguments against the postponement were outlined in an address to the *Bureau de la Ville* by Brigard, *ibid.*, X, 43.

[54] At one point in the fall of 1589 the *lansquenets* destroyed a large number of houses when the *Bureau* refused to supply them with adequate firewood; *ibid.*, IX, 520.

[55] Mayenne to bishop of Plaisance, 19 December 1590, *Correspondance*, I, 187. See also Mayenne to *prévôt des marchands*, *ibid.*, 158-159, in which Mayenne refused to withdraw the *lansquenets*.

[56] L'Estoile, 58. For examples of the hardships of the siege see Pierre Corneio, "Bref discours et véritable des choses plus notables arrivées au siége mémorable de la renommée ville de Paris," *Archives Curieuses*, XIII, 233-270.

[57] The plot is described in *Registres*, IX, 641-642.

[58] L'Estoile, 49.

[59] This point is made in Baumgartner, "Political Thought of the Radicals of Paris", 255.

[60] L'Estoile, 48.

[61] See Sir Charles Oman, *The Art of War in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1937), chapters IX and X.

[62] Palma Cayet, 248.

[63] *Ibid*.

[64] These negotiations are described in Villeroy, *Mémoires d'Éstat*.

[65] Palma Cayet, 248-249.

[66] *Ibid*.

[67] Examples of the use of this formula may be found in *Registres*, X, 19-60, passim.

[68] This order is in *Correspondance*, I, 256-257.

[69] Palma Cayet, 263-265.

[70] L'Estoile, 93.

[71] *Ibid*., 97.

[72] Descriptions of the Conference at Vincennes may be found in Villeroy, *Mémoires d'Éstat*, 169 and Ascoli, "'The Sixteen'", 550-555.

[73] Mayenne to Jeannin, 28 March 1591, *Correspondance*, II, 107.

[74] "Lettres patentes du lieutenant-général du royaume, portant exclusion des offices de ceux qui ne tiennent pas le parti de l'Union," Isambert, *Recueil Général*, XV, 21.

[75] Villeroy, *Mémoires d'Éstat*, 169.

[76] Mayenne to *Chambre des Comptes*, 12 April 1591, *Correspondance*, II, 152.

[77] The abortive Estates-General at Reims is described in Ascoli, "'The Sixteen'", 560-563.

[78] *Registres*, X, 147-151 and 153-159.

[79] See a letter of the papal legate to the pope in October 1591 in which he describes Mayenne's unpopularity and the criticisms levelled at him; quoted in L'Épinois, *La Ligue et les Papes*, 508.

[80] L'Estoile, 118-119.

[81] The case of Brigard is detailed in Ascoli, "'The Sixteen'", 582-586.

[82] For the meetings of early November and the election of the Council of Ten see "Assemblée secrette de plusiers bourgeois de la ville de Paris," Archives Curieuses, XIII, 309-318.

[83] There are two lengthy and substantially similar accounts of the murders in Palma Cayet, 324-329 and L'Estoile, 134-136. See also Paul Gambier, Le president Barnabé Brisson, Ligueur, 1531-1591 (Paris, 1957), chapter III.

[84] L'Estoile, 141, claims to have seen one of these lists, in which he was marked to be stabbed.

[85] Robiquet, Histoire Municipale de Paris, III, 79.

[86] Mayenne's mother, Mme de Nemours, begged him to come to Paris "to deliver it from the servitude to which it is reduced under the domination of these wicked men." L'Épinois, La Ligue et les Papes, 519.

[87] L'Estoile, 137.

[88] Villeroy, Mémoires d'Éstat, 177.

[89] L'Estoile, 147. L'Estoile also notes Mayenne's activities on each of the days after his arrival, 143-147, and gives a scurrilous epitaph for each of the four that were executed, 148-149. See also Palma Cayet, 331.

[90] "Aboliton du duc de Mayenne sur ce qui s'est fait à Paris sur la mort ignomineuse du president Brisson, les conseillers Larcher et Tardif," Mémoires de la Ligue, V, 74.

[91] The decree ordering this oath is in Registres, X, 198.

[92] Ibid., 205-206.

[93] Ibid., 219.

[94] Mémoires de la Ligue, IV, 633-658.

[95] Registres, X, 203-204.

[96] Ibid., 207-209.

[97] Quoted in L'Épinois, La Ligue et les Papes, 533. See also 537-540.

[98] Ibid., 399-400.

[99] Mayenne to M. de Diou, 17 February 1591, Correspondance, II, 65-66.

[100] For the Seize in 1592 see Ascoli, "'The Sixteen'", 632-635.

[101] Isambert, Recueil Général, XV, 39; see also Maugis, Histoire du Parlement, II, 93-94.

[102] The meetings of the Politiques are fully described in L'Estoile, 188-190 and Palma Cayet, 393-395.

[103] Registres, X, 310-314.

CHAPTER THREE

MAYENNE, SPAIN AND THE POPE: THE QUEST FOR SUBSIDY

As early as 1562, in a Huguenot council of war held on the eve of the first religious war, admiral Coligny observed that the Guise family, whose dominance of the government and person of the young king was a primary factor underlying the war, would be considered the legitimists in the impending struggle. They controlled the superstructure of the government, upheld the traditional religion of the kingdom, and, in contradiction to the Huguenots' claims that they were trying to free the king from the tyranny of the Lorrainers, enjoyed the endorsement of the young Charles IX. Therefore, asserted Coligny, the Guises would claim to be, with wide popular support, the 'Party of Order', the defendors of tradition and the established system. If any campaign by the Huguenots were to be successful it would have to be undertaken quickly, for time is on the side of those defending the existing order, while a supreme psychological disadvantage lies with those fighting for change.[1]

Although the relative positions and aims of the parties *vis-à-vis* the crown and national tradition were immeasurably more complex in the early 1590's, Coligny's dictum of 1562 was still relevant. Both sides claimed to be mobilized in the defense of the traditions of France. However, in spite of his religion, Henri de Navarre could in many ways justifiably presume to represent the 'Party of Order'. He was the legitimate heir to the throne, which claim was confirmed by the deathbed wish of Henri III that Navarre be his successor. He proposed no alterations to the traditional governance of France and advocated a return to a firm centralized administration and strong royal government.[2] Against this the League, by the nature of its revolt against Henri III, could realistically claim only its stance of religious orthodoxy as proof of its legitimacy. Even the detailed studies of the party's theoreticians could not find convincing precedents for the election of a monarch, upon which rested the success or failure of the movement.[3] The League undoubtedly represented the greatest departure from tradition and, as such, it was incumbent upon the League to seize the initiative in order to attain its goals. However, the serious divisions and weaknesses which existed within the League hindered the concerted offensive that was necessary to overcome Henri de Navarre and elect a king satisfactory to the many different factional interests of the League's membership.

Religious conformity constituted a worthy cause in the minds of most of the French, but the prospect of stability under Navarre became increasingly alluring during the protracted civil disruption. Mayenne recognized the disadvantageous situation of his party. He was in revolt and the longer the revolt continued the weaker the movement became, partly as a result of the psychological factor described by Coligny.

> Time gives the king of Navarre the opportunity to strengthen the loyalty of the princes and people of his faction, to become more closely associated with them and to increase his resources and his troops. He is, therefore, trying to delay the war . . . .[4]

But time was working against the League. For this reason, in addition to purely military considerations, Mayenne needed to generate a successful military campaign against Navarre to prevent the destruction of the League.

However, to fight the royalists on an extensive scale required vast amounts of money to hire, pay and maintain troops. Particularly after the initial losses of 1589 and 1590 the League was not able to raise such sums, and Mayenne increasingly sought foreign subsidy. The quest for this aid became the primary goal of his diplomacy. With Spain, the pope, the Catholic Swiss cantons and the Catholic German princes he maintained close correspondence in an effort to secure aid more substantial than mere pledges of solidarity.

Mayenne's diplomacy aimed also to attain the diplomatic recognition of the League by foreign powers. For the League to be successful it was important that it appear to represent France on an international basis. Mayenne struggled to have the papal legate to France accredited to the League, which would have been tantamount to formal recognition by the pope. In similar fashion, he urged other nations to send ambassadors exclusively to the League, but the only favourable response to this overture came from Spain. Normal diplomatic relations were indeed maintained with European states previously in regular communication with France, but inevitably the Protestant principalities sided with Henri de Navarre. The Catholic powers, on the other hand, did not rush to the support of the League. Most did not commit themselves either diplomatically or militarily in the French civil wars, perhaps out of fear of compromising their relations with France should Navarre be victorious.

Important as these purely formal aspects of Mayenne's foreign relations may have been, the problem of obtaining subsidy dominated his diplomatic activities. As the leader of the League he was expected to pursue negotiations with the Catholic princes of Europe. In all the petitions that the Seize presented to Mayenne, the request that he actively seek aid, particularly from Spain or the pope, occupied an important place. One such article suggested that he

> procure quickly the friendship, alliance and aid of all the Catholic princes, lords and potentates, especially those from whom may be expected the greatest, surest and promptest aid, just as the enemy is doing with all foreign heretics: we can and must obtain more aid than they.[5]

Although the various princes of the League also kept in contact with foreign powers, mainly Spain, these dealings were concerned almost exclusively with personal matters, whereas Mayenne's negotiations were predominantly conducted for the League, but in his name.

From the first days of his leadership Mayenne perceived the urgency of obtaining a wide base of support from the Catholic powers. On 8 January 1589, shortly after his arrival in Dijon, he dispatched Jacques de Diou to the pope and sent another agent to Philip II of Spain, the first of many extraordinary missions.[6] Pierre Bautier, sieur de La Motte-Réal, was put in charge of a legation to the Catholic Swiss cantons to secure the goodwill, and hopefully some of the mercenaries, of this area.[7] For the first half of the year the cause of the League, insofar as it could be guaranteed by aid from these three sources, seemed assured. Several of the Swiss cantons promised to send troops while the pope, although reluctant to make any material commitments, did evince definite sympathies for the League's cause. The pontiff at this time, Sixtus V, had often shown his approval of the religious zeal which motivated the League but had also demonstrated his disapproval of any actions taken against the legitimate monarch. With Henri III's murder of the cardinal de Guise and the king's refusal to release the cardinal de Bourbon, Sixtus inclined more and more toward the League. The alliance of Henri III with the heretic Navarre lost the unfortunate Valois the last of his remaining credibility with the pope. On 5 May Sixtus issued a strong condemnation of Henri's action, which concluded with the threat of excommunication if amends were not promptly made.[8]

Early contacts with Spain also indicated highly favourable returns for the League. In one of his first letters to Philip Mayenne discoursed at some length on the cause which the League represented, the cause of international Catholicism. The French movement was only part of the battle against heresy, but if Catholicism were to be preserved a stand would have to be taken in France. His position as the preeminent Catholic monarch of Europe, symbolized by his title of His Most Catholic Majesty, obliged Philip to be the main buttress of the Catholic League.[9] After the death of Henri III Mayenne stressed that now, more than ever, his help was needed, "now that we have an enemy, the Chief of Heresy, who is being assisted by all the princes separated from the Church."[10] Already committed to the League by the support furnished to Guise, Philip responded favourably to Mayenne's requests and authorized Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador in Paris, to allocate 600,000 *écus* for the French leader to raise troops in Germany.[11] Other subsidies were also paid to Mayenne in 1589, usually through Mendoza, who was officially accredited to the League after the murder of Henri III.[12]

These infrequent contributions, however, were not sufficient to meet the needs of Mayenne. The year advanced, the costs mounted, and the successes of Henri de Navarre, culminating in the victory of Arcques, destroyed the hopes for a rapid League triumph. In November, shortly after Arcques, Mayenne sent his son-in-law, the comte de Montpézat, to solicit Philip for additional funds to maintain the struggle.[13] Some money had been brought to Paris by two of Philip's officials from the Netherlands, Jean-Baptiste de Tassis and Jean Moreo, but it barely served to meet the arrears in pay owing to even a fraction of the League's army.[14] Two months later Mayenne sent another agent, M. de Rossieux, to Flanders to request assistance directly from the duke of Parma, Philip's Governor of the Netherlands.[15] Mayenne informed Philip of this mission in a very ingratiating, humble letter in which he lavished extravagent praise upon the monarch's virtues and then pleaded for greater support.[16] Already Mayenne was reduced to the role of beggar in his quest for more aid.

Philip continued fairly substantial assistance through the winter of 1589-1590. For example, when the Italian banking family of Spinola indicated their willingness to lend 400,000 écus to the League, Philip guaranteed repayment of the loan in Spain.[17] However, such irregular endowments could not be relied upon, nor were they wholly appreciated by all of the Leaguers. A growing anti-Spanish feeling was aroused among the moderate Leaguers, an aversion to any large-scale indebtedness to Philip for fear of a more direct interference in French affairs in the future.

This fear was not without a foundation in fact. Mayenne soon realized the inherent dangers of Spanish assistance; the pretensions of the Catholic king grew as the League's coffers were drained and Mayenne's dependence upon aid from Spain increased. Philip's assistance to the League was not gratuitous. He had very definite expectations of compensation for his troubles. He considered a Catholic monarch the most necessary requirement for France, "and those who say that the kingdom could recover its former splendor in any other way are deceiving themselves."[18] However, the Catholic monarch envisaged by Philip was his own daughter, the Infanta Isabella. As early as 1584 he had entertained the idea that Isabella, his daughter by Elisabeth, the daughter of Henri II, could lay claim to the throne of France,[19] but it was not until 1589 that he began to work towards this end. He instructed his ambassador in Paris to "drop a few hints to certain people concerning the rights of the Senora Infanta."[20] By his circumspect management of the assertion of the Infanta's rights Philip merits the sobriquet of 'the Prudent' which is commonly ascribed to him. Undoubtedly aware of the division in the upper echelons of the League, which could affect adversely the advancement of Isabella to the Queen's throne, he waited for the Estates-General before making any official proclamation of her candidacy. In the meantime his agents cast about for support, "to feel out . . . opinions and spirit and take note of how the idea [the Infanta's candidacy] is received, without giving the wrong impression."[21] In addition to this careful probing, Philip sought to gain more immediate concessions within France. The issue of the title of Protector, already described, is one significant example. Only Mayenne's obvious reluctance to allow such a concession to Spain and his deferral of any decision until the arrival of the legate blocked this bid by Philip.[22] Philip, while an absolutely indispensable source of aid, was also a most troublesome ally and potential threat to Mayenne, who for his part was intent on preserving the territorial and national integrity of the kingdom as far as possible.

Complications and difficulties also occurred with another of the League's prime allies, the pope. Logically the pontiff should have been the greatest supporter of a movement dedicated to the extirpation of heresy and the exclusion of a heretic from the second throne of Europe, but Sixtus V had serious reservations about the methods and even the religious sincerity of the League. Of moderate inclination, he was loath to act before carefully examining the situation. He was one of the few popes of the period unwilling to bow to the dictates of Philip II in foreign policy. Sixtus recognized the need for a strong France to challenge the Spanish hegemony over Europe.[23] As a result, he did not fully endorse the League, even after Henri III's open alliance with the heretic Navarre, for fear of sanctioning a group which would only further fragment France.

The League's delegation to the pope, headed by Jacques de Diou, officially presented their case in September 1589. The envoys were furnished with instructions from Mayenne which described at great length the perfidy and incompetence of Henri III and the justness of the cause of the League. After many flattering remarks to the pope, they were to introduce the actual purpose of the mission, which was to gain the committment and aid of the pontiff.[24] The proposals included a request that Sixtus should "open his treasury and make a gift of a notable sum, . . . which could not be employed for a better cause."[25] Sixtus was asked to recognize the duc de Mayenne as the lieutenant-general and to send a legate, furnished with letters of support for the League from the pope, directly to Paris. Finally, Mayenne stipulated that Diou insist that Sixtus not receive the ambassador of Henri de

Navarre, the duc de Luxembourg, who was making his way to Rome.[26] The position and prerogatives of the French resident ambassador were to be assumed by Diou, representing the League.

Sixtus' reception of these requests was noticeably cool. He replied to Diou that the information presented was not sufficient to enable him to pass judgement on affairs in France.[27] On these grounds he refused to acknowledge Diou as the ambassador of France and declined to offer any support, whether monetary or in the form of a written endorsement of Mayenne and the League, until he was more fully apprised of the situation. In addition, when Luxembourg finally arrived in Rome Sixtus had frequent conversations with him, in spite of the indignant protests of the League and Spain. The only consolation Mayenne could draw from these audiences was the pope's refusal to award Luxembourg the official status that he had also denied to Diou.

To ascertain the true state of the parties in France Sixtus decided to send a legate to Paris who was not, however, sent to the League. Cardinal Caetano, a member of the pro-Spanish party in the curia, was selected and furnished with detailed instructions as to the nature of his mission.[28] Caetano's primary function was to be one of peacemaker and conciliator among the various Catholic factions, including the Catholics around Henri de Navarre. He was also to investigate the motivations of the leading Leaguers, principally Mayenne. Was he sincerely interested in the conservation of Catholicism or were his intentions more devious, perhaps touching the crown itself? The extent of support for Charles X, the hapless cardinal de Bourbon, had also to be determined to enable Sixtus to decide whether he should be recognized as king.[29] Above all, Sixtus cautioned Caetano against offering any active support for the League, which would be misconstrued by the royalists as an indication of papal policy. Such precautions certainly do not suggest an overabundance of papal confidence or trust in the League and Mayenne.

If Sixtus was hesitant in his relations with the League, Caetano had no doubts as to how Catholicism in France could best be served. Upon his arrival in Paris on 21 January 1590 he promptly violated the tenor of his instructions. In a dispatch to the pope he observed that

> My arrival brought enlightenment to the situation . . .. I found the city of Paris in a very critical position. No money remained; all the available assets since the death of the duc de Guise have been used to pay the army. Commerce has ceased, the cost of food is great and the people are suffering from it; no one cultivates the fields for fear of Navarre and his soldiers. His partisans have already convinced the people that the propositions of peace should be accepted, but having arrived in time to frustrate these intrigues, I will be able to stop them.[30]

Within a short time he became closely associated with the radicals of Paris and began working in conjunction with Mayenne to thwart the conciliatory moves of the Politiques.[31] In direct contravention of Sixtus' orders, he lent Mayenne 50,000 écus[32] and solicited more funds from the pope on behalf of the League.[33] Caetano also became closely associated with Mendoza, to the extent that Villeroy accused him of promoting division within the League "the better to serve and please the king of Spain."[34] Caetano's obvious preference for the League, indeed the radical sector of the League, exceeded his instructions and thoroughly infuriated Sixtus, who was powerless to do anything but chastise the errant legate in angry letters from Rome.

Of Mayenne's two anticipated backers in early 1590, one was unwilling to grant any assistance and the other was willing, but the dangers implicit in association with Philip almost outweighed the advantages to be gained through his aid. In the first year of his leadership Mayenne's diplomacy had failed to procure any substantial subsidies, and his allies, including the Swiss, had not translated their original expressions of support into concrete aid sufficient to allow the League to function above a strictly subsistence level. This problem, coupled with the internal dissension within the League and the pressure applied by Henri de Navarre's forces, crippled any attempts made by Mayenne to further the movement. On 14 March 1590 his defeat at the battle of Ivry brought the League to its knees and sparked a major military crisis. The remnants of his reassembled army were hopelessly outnumbered by the royal troops. To compound the problems, on the same day a League army had been annihilated by royalists at Issoire in the Auvergne. Navarre pressed on after these successes to undertake the siege of Paris. In the months following Ivry the survival of the capital became the focal point of all Mayenne's efforts: to ensure its safety against the onslaught of the royalists, assistance from foreign sources was absolutely imperative.

One week before the debacle of Ivry Mayenne had informed Moreo in Flanders that large numbers of his soldiers had threatened to desert if not immediately paid.[35] During the battle many of these troops did indeed fail to withstand the enemy.[36] Whether or not their desertion decided the course of the engagement, Mayenne attributed his defeat to their inconstancy and, indirectly, to the failure of his allies. On 28 March 1590 he wrote to the pope, asking why Sixtus had deserted him in his hour of need. Why, he pleaded, would the pope not send him money or troops, for lack of which the Huguenots were on the verge of destroying the kingdom.[37] Sixtus' only reply was to blame the rash policies of Caetano and Mayenne's greed for the loss.[38] He unequivocally refused any aid to the League, and through the rest of the spring granted a suspiciously large number of audiences to the duc de Luxembourg. In July he was reportedly heard to call Philip II "a totally criminal man" and declare that he would "throw his money into the Tiber rather than give it to Mayenne."[39]

The loss at Ivry also occasioned with withdrawal of Swiss support. Leon Lescot, abbé de Clermont, had been Mayenne's agent in the Catholic cantons since September 1589. Although Charles X was not recognized by these cantons, Clermont claimed to be his representative, under the orders of Mayenne.[40] Clermont made the extravagent claim that the League would honour all the debts incurred by Henri III in Switzerland and grossly misrepresented the state of affairs in France in favour of the League. The Swiss became exasperated at his empty promises of reimbursement and his lies about the successes of the League. Although his residency lasted only a short period, by March Clermont had made himself so unpopular that when he heard secretly of the victory of Navarre he ignominiously fled across the border into France.[31] Thereafter Mayenne's relations with the Catholic Swiss cantons were infrequent and without advantage for the French leader.

Mayenne thus became solely dependant upon Spain for the external succour that he so desperately required. His first communication with Philip II after Ivry echoed the explanation of the loss supplied to the pope -- the desertion of the mercenaries. He added his fear that Navarre would press on to an assault on Paris, which was indefensible with the number of troops in the city.[42] After reorganizing his forces

Navarre did move on Paris; on 8 May Huguenot artillery began a cannonade of the city from the heights of Montmartre. Philip, whose interest in the struggle was more immediate than the Swiss' and more pragmatic than the pope's, could not allow the struggle to end with Navarre's capture of Paris, which would almost certainly occur without his interference. In addition, extra incentive had been added on 9 May when the cardinal de Bourbon died; the stage was now clear for the advancement of the Infanta's claims. But more immediately, the League had to be rescued.

As early as September 1589 Philip had realized the inevitability of active intervention. At that time he had warned his governor and military leader in the Netherlands, Alexander Farnèse, the duke of Parma, to stand ready for an expedition to France "to extinguish the fire which threatens to engulf Christendom."[43] Mayenne realized as the spring of 1590 progressed that financial aid would not be sufficient to forestall the royalist capture of Paris. Time was inadequate to hire and equip troops. His own entreaties to Parma to raise the siege with Spanish troops were added to Philip's letters to his Italian commander. "Until our affairs are in better condition," Mayenne wrote Parma, "we desperately need your money and your personal presence" [i.e., with his army].[44] Parma, however, was reluctant to deprive the Netherlands of any of its forces in order to pursue an expedition into France. On 20 May Mayenne met Parma at Condé personally to urge his immediate journey to Paris. Philip's general expressed vague sentiments of support and promised to lead his army when affairs permitted, but would not commit himself to a specific date.[45]

Meanwhile, conditions in Paris reached a crucial stage by June, the second month of the seige: food supplies were exhausted, the royalist blockade became tighter with each day and, worst of all, morale in the city was waning.[46] At the end of the month Mayenne wrote to Moreo, who was with Parma, that the prévôt des marchands had warned him that the city would surrender within a week if there was no positive indication that Parma was on his way. "Come, please, I beg you," Mayenne implored, "but do not come without money and troops."[47] But Parma did not come. Until the middle of August he continued to procrastinate. By that time the royalist pressure had so far undermined the resistance of Paris that a deputation was actually sent to Henri de Navarre to seek terms for the surrender of the city.[48] Parma, however, had finally began his march on Paris, and on 7 September 1590 he captured the town of Lagny, on the Seine above Paris, and freed river traffic into the capital. In the following weeks his forces captured several other key points in the Ile-de-France, after which Parma returned to the Netherlands, harassed all the way by Henri de Navarre.

Parma disobeyed Philip with his long delay in marching to raise the siege of Paris. He had been ordered to go earlier, but feared an offensive by the Dutch while he was preoccupied with the French expedition.[49] Many of the French, including Villeroy, suspected Parma of deliberate stalling, perhaps to demonstrate the League's total dependency upon his aid. "Spain," said the Venetian ambassador in Madrid, "is administering its support as a doctor administers food to a patient, not in sufficient quantities to make him stronger nor little enough to let him die."[50] Once Parma did join with Mayenne to raise the siege the relations between the two were poor, for Mayenne resented the arrogance and pretensions of the Italian.[51] In light of later events, when Parma voiced suspicion of Mayenne's motives and purposes, these feelings were undoubtedly reciprocated, despite Parma's protestations to Philip that "I am convinced that Mayenne is a man of truth, faith and of his word."[52] The League had been saved from almost certain annihilation, but the relief of Paris was only a temporary alleviation of the increasing problem of subsidy. Parma was back in the Netherlands by November, leaving the League in the same desperate straits which had existed prior to his incursion, while Navarre regrouped his forces and sought troops from Elizabeth of England for the campaign of 1591.

In the midst of the crisis of 1590 an opportune death in Rome gave Mayenne hopes for a revision in papal policy. On the evening of 27 August Sixtus V died. The only distinguishing aspect of his successor's pontificate was its brevity; Urban VII died scarcely ten days after his election. Following Urban, after a conclave of close to two months, came Gregory XIV, who mounted the throne of St. Peter on 5 December 1590. Mayenne's first concern was to discover the inclinations of the new pope. Through the fall of 1590, while the conclave was in session, Mayenne maintained constant communication with Diou, his ambassador in Rome. He wanted to be apprised immediately of the character and proclivites of the successful candidate in order to know how best to achieve his good graces.[53] He was undoubtedly delighted to hear that Gregory was a strong supporter of Spain; Philip's influence had been a determining factor in the election.[54]

Faced with the prospect of a new ally, Mayenne quickly decided to make his position clear. He sent the Archbishop of Lyon, a subtle diplomat proven in the service of the League, to assist Diou in Rome. In advance of the Archbishop went a new set of instructions for Diou which, when stripped of the florid prose, may be reduced to four specific requests. First Mayenne declared that, to correct an embarrassing anomaly, the pope would have to excommunicate the Catholics who persisted in their attachment to Henri de Navarre; this apparently was aimed in particular against the cardinals de Bourbon and Lenoncourt. Mayenne then bemoaned his financial position at great length, including the failure of the duke of Parma to stay in France, and asked the pope to lend substantial sums of money. Third, he declared the League to be "like a body without a head" since Caetano had returned to Rome for the election of Gregory XIV and implored the dispatch of another legate to represent the pope at the Estates-General which, he hinted, would soon be convoked. Finally, Mayenne reiterated a request which had been presented to Sixtus V and promptly dismissed; that the pope approve and coordinate an international confederation of Catholic princes to undertake a crusade against Henri de Navarre.[55]

These proposals were formulated largely in light of disconcerting new developments in the royalist camp. In late 1590 and early 1591 the vicomte de Turenne was engaged in a long series of negotiations with England which ultimately resulted in the formation of a substantial force at Navarre's disposal for the coming campaign. From Elizabeth Turenne secured 4,000 auxiliary troops and, more importantly, funds to raise 15,000 additional soldiers in Germany.[56] Obviously, Mayenne needed to form an international coalition to counter this threat, a coalition based on the expectation of massive support from Spain and the pope.

In a complete repudiation of the policies of Sixtus V, Gregory XIV soon emerged as a whole-hearted supporter of the League. Virtually all of Mayenne's initial requests were granted. Gregory chose Cardinal Landriano, another pro-Spanish legate, to carry the official tidings of the pope's support to France. Among his credentials Landriano had a monitor which reaffirmed the excommunication of Henri de Navarre as a relapsed heretic and ordered the Catholics in the camp of the Huguenot leader to join the League.[57] Although not requested to do so, Gregory also granted a monthly sum of 15,000 scudi to the city of Paris, to sustain it against the "sacreligious assaults" of the royalists.[58] Finally, and most decisive to the needs of Mayenne, Gregory decided upon military intervention. By June 1591 preparations for an expeditionary force of 7,000 Italian troops were complete. Cardinal Sfondrato, the pope's nephew, was created duke of Montemarciano and given command of the army.

Although this aid was urgently needed, Mayenne was reserved in his enthusiasm for the pope's actions. Numerous dispatches from this period contain his complaints against several factions of cardinals in Rome who were working to reverse Gregory's generous support for the League. One of Mayenne's secretaries of state, Baudouin Desportes, was sent on a special mission to assure the pope of Mayenne's committment to the cause and to quash the intrigues in the Sacred College of Cardinals.[59] The leader's letters to his confidants became increasingly bitter as a result of the mounting attacks on his policies, both in Paris and in Rome.

> I will not say, although you must admit it, that after God alone I have most aided the Catholics of France and that without me this crown would be no more in the obedience of His Holiness than that of Scotland and England.[60]
>
> Formerly the most esteemed prince of the kingdom, I have become the most odious and most scorned; and I receive no recompense for my travails other than blame and accusation.[61]

He also wrote frequently to sympathetic cardinals in Rome, begging them to intercede with the pope on his behalf.[62]

In all of these letters Mayenne assumed an extremely defensive tone. He must surely have been under heavy criticism to go to such great lengths to justify himself when, by early 1591, he knew of the benevolent attitude of Gregory XIV. He urged Diou to caution the pope against the insinuations of his enemies.[63] As well, Mayenne maintained constant contact with cardinal Sfondrato, created duke of Montemarciano in June, for the cardinal was the administrator of the pope's finances. Mayenne kept Sfondrato supplied with information of events in France, accounts which were largely imaginative exaggerations of his successes and popular support, in order to conceal the serious divisions within the League.[64] These had been strengthened by Mayenne's failure to prevent the royalist capture of Chartres after a siege of two months. Sentiment within the League, particularly in Paris, attached great importance to the relief of this town -- one of the prédicateurs promised his soul to the devil if God allowed Navarre entry into the cathedral city[65] -- and blamed Mayenne's lethargy for its fall on 12 April. Also, the monthly payments, which inevitably fell into the hands of the radicals, contributed to making them financially independent of the leader. When Mayenne heard of Gregory's intention of sending a force to France he interpreted this as yet another threat to his leadership.

Parma's relief of Paris had stirred in Mayenne the fear that the commander of a foreign relief force would detract from the prestige of his own position. He ordered Diou to solicit the pope to send money rather than troops. This, Mayenne said, would be the most feasible solution, for he could raise troops himself in less time than a force could travel from Rome to France.[66] Mayenne apparently considered that the pope was signalling his distrust by sending Montemarciano. He wanted funds over which he would have control, but Gregory was indeed wary of Mayenne, lest he misspend the money, and so continued preparations for Montemarciano's expedition, which left in June. Recognizing the improbability of the pope reconsidering the dispatch of the expedition, Mayenne stressed to his agents in Rome that he at least be granted the command of the united Catholic army.

> Holding the position in this kingdom that I do and having employed all of my efforts and means, it would not be reasonable for another prince to take the honour from me, an honour which I have earned by my leadership. . . .[67]

One month later he reiterated this position:

> It would not be reasonable for me to be deprived of the honour of leading the movement that I have maintained to this time, and someone else . . . should come to reap the fruit that I have nurtured to maturity, making my work meaningless and denying me the recognition I deserve from His Holiness. . . .[68]

But Montemarciano's relationship with Mayenne, once the army should reach France, was never defined by the pope.

Mayenne was thus assured of aid from the pope, albeit in a form not entirely to his liking. The second step in his planned coalition was to secure assistance from Spain. Parma had left France in November 1590 with the promise to return in the following spring and complete the extermination of the Huguenots. To demonstrate his good intentions he left a token force of 2,000 troops with Mayenne.[69] It is, however, debatable as to whether Parma ever meant to return to France. During his absence in 1590 the Dutch had mounted an offensive which succeeded in capturing several important fortresses which it was essential that Parma regain. Nonetheless Mayenne seemed to believe that Parma would return. In December 1590 he sent an agent to the duke to obtain 100,000 écus and the date that he could expect Parma's arrival.[70] The comte de Brissac soon followed this mission, furnished with similar instructions from Mayenne.[71] By 15 March 1591 Brissac had informed Mayenne that, despite his vehement statements concerning his desire to go to France, Parma was not disposed to sacrifice his gains in the Netherlands and leave his flank exposed for the sake of an adventure in France.[72] But Mayenne did not despair of receiving aid from Parma. On 28 April he sent yet another ambassador to Brussels to inform Parma of the pitiful state of the League,[73] followed by numerous letters with the now-familiar descriptions of Huguenot successes and the desperate need for subsidy.[74] Soon after this Philip's orders were added to Mayenne's exhortations; "If you wanted to render the best service to me . . . you would enter France with the least possible delay."[75] But Parma was not enthralled with Philip's ambitions as self-appointed Catholic champion of Europe, and preferred instead to concentrate on the business at hand, the reduction of the Dutch rebels. Mayenne therefore directed his appeals toward Philip. At a meeting of the princes of the Guise family at Reims in April 1591 it was resolved to send Jeannin directly to Madrid. He was instructed to ascertain Philip's true position vis-à-vis the League and the election of a king and to negotiate a generous subsidy, which hopefully would include the dispatch of Parma to aid in the struggle.[76]

Concurrently with these attempts to extract forces from Parma and money from Philip II, and to secure his position against the anticipated aid from the pope, Mayenne corresponded with other Catholic leaders in the view of obtaining at least moral support for his cause.

At different times he dispatched flurries of letters to German princes, such as the duke of Bavaria and even the Emperor, and to the rulers of the Italian principalities, such as Mantua.[77] In all his letters he preached the League's principles and intimated that positive support, that is, money, would be greatly appreciated. In fact, none of these princes ever sent any money and few gave more than cursory acknowledgement to Mayenne's overtures. The furor against heretics did not seem to deter Mayenne from maintaining contact with the Sultan as well as with Catholic Europe. These communications conformed to contemporary diplomatic convention, dominated by professions of undying esteem and friendship. But Mayenne also took the opportunity to proselytize the League's _raison d'être_, claiming in one letter that he would lay down his arms only when "those who want to abolish the ancient customs and fundamental laws of the kingdom" were defeated.[78]

Parma's recalcitrance and the threat Mayenne anticipated from the approaching papal army were in many respects relegated to the background in the early summer of 1591. Prospects for a successful campaign against Navarre were better than they had ever been. Philip had, after all, promised to send aid -- it would only be a matter of time before Parma obliged his sovereign; and although the pope's assistance was not in the preferred form, 7,000 troops did constitute a significant addition to Mayenne's forces, and the leader was confident of his ability to assert his authority over Montemarciano's. Landriano arrived in Paris in June with his letters and instruction and threw the full weight of his prestige behind the League. All of these auspicious indications, however, soon came to nought for the League.

Late in August Jeannin returned from Madrid with the report of his discussions with Philip II. Jeannin informed Mayenne that Philip had been extremely demanding, and although he had promised to force Parma to leave the Netherlands and pay 10,000 _écus_ per month to Mayenne, he had also stipulated that the Salic Law must be abrogated to allow the election of the Infanta in the near future.[79] This _quid pro quo_ for his aid, the first demanded by Philip, caused Mayenne serious misgivings, although he had no scruples over accepting the proffered monthly subsidy.

Shortly after this news Mayenne hurried to Verdun to meet Montemarciano's forces, finally arrived in Lorraine, and was greeted by a severely disappointing sight; on the long march half of the papal army had either deserted or fallen to disease. Montemarciano could maintain neither discipline nor organization and the poor condition of the army, corroborated by various contemporary descriptions, prompted Villeroy's contemptuous remark on the nature of the pope's aid.

> This sorry collection of men was the force that they said in Rome would soon destroy His Majesty [Henri de Navarre] and his followers and would implement the bulls and fulminations of His Holiness, which had been carried and published by Landriano.[80]

Villeroy went on to contrast this rabble with the army which had been raised for Navarre in Germany, an army of over 16,000 disciplined, healthy soldiers. Disgruntled at the condition of his reinforcements, Mayenne was actually left in a seriously compromised position. He had planned to supplement his own forces with the papal army and prevent the Germans from entering France and combining with Navarre. Instead, he could not even coordinate the movements of Montemarciano's army with his own. "It seems that the commanders agree not well," commented an English observer in Sedan, "for the Duke of Maine and the Pope's nephew do each give a differing watchword, and their soldiers cut one another's throat if they stray anything from the army."[81] Navarre's German recruits passed through Lorraine virtually unopposed and laid siege to Rouen early in November.

The commercial and strategic importance of Rouen made the relief of this town almost as important as had been the saving of Paris in 1590. The blow to the League's credibility had Rouen fallen would have been almost insurmountable. Mayenne's only recourse was an appeal once more to Philip.

> The members of the French League have informed His Majesty [Philip II] that unless they receive such support during this year as will enable them to put an end to the war, or at least to better their position, they will be forced to come to terms with the King of Navarre.[82]

As always, Philip was willing to help, but Parma again continued to demur at leaving the Netherlands. Jeannin went to Brussels to conduct negotiations with Philip's political agents, and while there urged Parma to accelerate his preparations;[83] but the duke did not actually enter France until late in December, when he joined with Mayenne at Guise. Parma refused to advance further until he was allowed to place a garrison at La Fère and several other minor forts to protect his supply lines.[84] Reluctantly Mayenne was forced to concede these demands. Within four months Parma was able to brush aside the harassment of Henri de Navarre and free Rouen from the surrounding royalist army.

Four months of close contact scarcely improved the already cool relations between the two dukes. Parma became exasperated at Mayenne's fluctuating strategy: at first the French leader wanted to force a battle with Navarre; then, after the danger to Rouen was only partially eased, wanted Parma to leave immediately, claiming that he could manage the dispersal of the royalist army himself. Mayenne obviously was still afraid that Parma would gain too much credit by any major success. Parma suspected "some very dangerous mystery" in his behavior, based on rumors that Mayenne was in negotiation with Navarre even during the campaign to raise the siege.[85] Parma's misgivings were well founded, for Mayenne's agents were indeed engaged in talks with representatives of the Huguenot leader.

Since 1590 Mayenne's negotiator Villeroy had held intermittent talks with agents of Henri de Navarre, usually Philippe du Plessis-Mornay. Although Villeroy was often the initiating force behind these meetings, out of a sincere desire to compose the differences in France, Mayenne was always aware of and usually gave his endorsement to the proceedings. Some were simply 'normal' exchanges between enemies, such as arranging the details of a pact allowing some trade to move unhindered in the Ile-de-France, but others were undertaken with the specific intent of reaching a settlement between the opposing parties.[86] The negotiations, however, always took place when the League was in a particularly vulnerable position, as after the loss at Ivry or in the early months of 1591, when Mayenne was awaiting the arrival of his allies' aid. In this instance he employed the blank passports provided by Navarre for the negotiators to bring the deputies for the impending Estates-General safely out of the provinces.[87] At other times, for example when Parma was in France in early 1592, Mayenne would allow the talks to continue until his military position was secure, and then abruptly order their termination.[88] Mayenne could rest assured that no decision would result from any of the discussions, since he would not permit Villeroy to offer any concessions until Navarre agreed to convert.

For this reason the talks were circular and inconclusive, to the complete frustration of Villeroy, but allowed Mayenne to gain a brief reprieve.

The Spanish, however, took a less pragmatic view of these negotiations than did Mayenne. They were suspicious of the prospect of any accommodation between Mayenne and Navarre, which would spell total disaster to Spanish aspirations in France. Mayenne informed Mendoza of the first of these tentative negotiations, held in order to stall for time in April 1590, "so that you will believe that I am a man of worth for telling you."[89] On subsequent occasions, however, the negotiations were conducted in strict secrecy, and rumour of them only reached the Spanish indirectly, further calling into question the reliability of their ally. After Parma returned to the Netherlands in May 1592, where he soon died of a wound received in France, the Spanish were reluctant to send more aid to the League or Mayenne, both of whom were weakening. Instead, Philip and his agents pressed for the immediate convocation of the Estates-General and completed the groundwork necessary for the presentation of the Infanta's claims.

From Rome there was also a decided reluctance to commit additional monies to the League. The new pope, Clement VIII, elected on 30 January 1592, was as solidly in favour of the League as had been Gregory XIV, but wanted a prompt resolution to the longstanding civil wars in France. He exhorted Mayenne to continue the struggle and sent a legate to support the cause, but at the same time he urged the Leaguers to resolve their differences in order to expedite the election of a monarch.[90] After the siege of Rouen the League's war effort declined sharply, partially as a result of lack of aid but also as a result of a decline in the offensive generated by the Huguenots, who were also undergoing a period of attrition. Throughout 1592 Mayenne's contact with his allies dealt primarily with preparations for the Estates-General, which all involved felt could not be postponed for much longer. By late 1592, when the meeting was a certainty, the pope and Spain concentrated almost exclusively upon its progress. They had supported the League through four difficult years and now contemplated their respective rewards.

Mayenne's relations with the pope and Spain were undertaken primarily with the intent of obtaining sufficient subsidy to maintain the potency of the League. For the period of 1589 to 1593 there is no evidence of attempts on his part to secure foreign support for any other reason. He did not declare himself a contender for the crown, nor did he lobby for the candidacy of any other. Although the kingdom became extremely fragmented, his alliances did not alienate any of the territories of France. Mayenne appears to have been seeking no more than the means to sustain the League. He recognized the pope as an ally preferable to Spain, since the pope's interest in France was ostensibly limited to the health of the Catholicism, and did not threaten the sovereignty of the French monarchy. However, with the exception of Gregory XIV, the popes were not willing to subsidize League endeavours. Circumstances forced Mayenne into heavy reliance upon Spanish assistance.

Philip, in contrast to the pope, had ulterior motives in rendering aid to the League. International politics and the prospects of immediate short-range gain made it to his advantage to foment French discord by supporting the League. In terms of a European balance of power, a divided France eased considerably the problems of Spain, particularly in the Netherlands. The threat of clandestine or even open French aid to the Dutch had been present since the beginning of the revolt in the north, and had been illustrated by the ill-fated adventures of the duc d'Anjou in 1581-1582. Philip's intention to debilitate France was generally recognized and is perhaps best described in a pamphlet dating from 1593, in which a Frenchman harangues a Savoyard on the pernicious intent of the Spanish monarch.

> For a long time he [Philip] has used a thousand artifices, a thousand ruses and a thousand detours to destroy our [France's] grandeur and to create divisions. He is the nurse maid of our troubles and our civil wars . . . . Have you [Savoy] not found that he weakens you . . . and makes your wars last as long as his own? . . . He is trying to make us [the League] totally irreconcilable to the party of the king of Navarre by giving us just enough money to survive.[91]

Mayenne's forced dependency upon Spain was also employed by royalist propagandists.

> This fat, ponderous 'Lieutenant-General and Master of the State and Crown of France' made himself the valet and slave of the most insolent nation of the world . . . and did not hesitate to prostitute and dishonour France and the name of the House of Lorraine. . . .[92]

However, Mayenne and the sincere adherents of the League, or at least those who wished for its continuation, could scarcely afford such sentiments. Spanish aid allowed the League to survive and twice, in 1590 and 1592, saved it in times of severe crisis.

At the same time Mayenne did not surrender any more than was necessary to Spain. His bargaining position was manifestly weak, but by the post he held he had power over the coming Estates-General. He intimated support for the Infanta's candidacy and the affinity of Philip's cause with his own, but when the reckoning came at the estates of 1593 the Spanish found, as indeed they had suspected, that his promises had only been artifices to gain their subsidy. Mayenne's duplicity is perhaps best illustrated by his reaction on discovering the covert communication of the _Seize_ with Spain. The _Seize_ wrote Philip in September 1591, complaining of the miseries of Paris and promising total support for Philip's daughter should the father come to the rescue of the League.[93] Mayenne's anger at this unauthorized concession was so great that many contemporaries believed it to be the fundamental motive behind his punishment of the _Seize_ in December that same year.[94] He could not tolerate any others involved in negotiations with Spain, undercutting his own position.

But Mayenne's search for subsidy, sometimes satisfied but usually resulting in only partial alleviation, could at best only postpone the final decision. The League was a terminal movement, one which could not last for an indefinite period. The entire character of the League under Mayenne was shaped by the premise that the movement was only a transient phase between the tyranny of Henri III and the election of an alternate monarch. By late 1592 the problems of the League, both external and internal, coalesced; the only conceivable solution capable of solving these problems was the meeting of the Estates-General. In one fashion or another the climax of the League was anticipated at this assembly, following which there could only be victory or defeat. The League had lasted too long and had lost too much of its original vitality to be able to return to the unsettled state of affairs which had existed for the four previous years.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1] Coligny's speech is in Agrippa d'Aubigné, Histoire Universelle, ed., Alphonse de Ruble (Paris, 1886-1899), II, 35.

[2] For discussions of Huguenot and Politique political theory, which largely supported Navarre's absolutist stance in the late 1580's, see Beame, "The Development of Politique Thought"; J.W. Allen, A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century (London, 1928); and André Lemaire, Les Lois Fondamentales de la Monarchie Française d'après les Théoriciens de l'Ancien Régime (Paris, 1907).

[3] All of the standard works on political thought of the period include discussions of the theory of the League. See William F. Church, Constitutional Thought in Sixteenth Century France (New York, 1969); Georges Weill, Les Théories sur le pouvoir royal en France pendant les guerres de Religion (Paris, 1891); and Baumgartner, "Political Thought of the Radicals". For an example of a contemporary contribution to the argument see Advertissement a Messieurs les deputez des estats, assemblez en la ville de Paris, au mois de janvier, 1593, anon., (Paris, 1593).

[4] Mayenne to Jacques de Diou, 22 May 1591, Correspondance, II, 255.

[5] "Articles remontres à monseigneur le duc de Mayenne," 29 November 1589, Mémoires de la Ligue, III, 536.

[6] de Thou, Histoire Universelle, VII, 391.

[7] Édouard Rott, Histoire de la Représentation Diplomatique de la France auprès des cantons Suisses (Berne, 1902), II, 386-388.

[8] For the attitude of Sixtus V toward the League and his letter of 5 May 1589 see Felix Rocquain, La France et Rome pendant les Guerres de Religion (Paris, 1924), chapter V and 388; L'Épinois, La Ligue et les Papes, 323-333; and Ludwig von Pastor, History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages (London, 1932), XXI, chapter VI and 318-320.

[9] Mayenne to Philip II, 22 March 1589, quoted in Bouillé, Histoire des ducs de Guise, III, 361.

[10] Mayenne to Philip II, 21 August 1589, Mémoires de la Ligue, V, 268.

[11] Édouard Fremy, Diplomates du temps de la Ligue (Paris, 1881), 240.

[12] Jensen, Diplomacy and Dogmatism, 197.

[13] Bouillé, Histoire des ducs de Guise, III, 419.

[14] Ibid., 401.

[15] Villeroy, Mémoires d'État, 147.

[16] Mayenne to Philip II, 12 January 1590, Croze, Les Guises, II, 399-401.

[17] This incident is mentioned in a dispatch of 9 February 1590 in Fugger Newsletters, 1568-1605, ed., Victor von Klarwill (London, 1925), 147-148.

[18] Philip II to Sixtus V, August 1589, quoted in L'Épinois, La Ligue et les Papes, 341n.

[19] Albert Mousset provides background to the Infanta's claims and Philip's measures to assert her rights in "Les Droits de l'Infante Isabelle-Claire-Eugénie à la couronne de France," Bulletin Hispanique, XVI (1914), 46-79.

[20] Philip II to Mendoza, 7 September 1589, in Jensen, Diplomacy and Dogmatism, 196.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Villeroy, Mémoires d'État, 146.

[23] For the broad political ideas of Sixtus see Pastor, History of the Popes, XXI, 1-5.

[24] "Mémoires et Instructions à Messieurs de Diou . . ., députés à notre Saint Pere, de la part de monseigneur le duc de Mayenne, Lieutenant général de l'Etat royal et couronne de France," Mémoires de la Ligue, III, 314-325.

[25] Ibid., 323.

[26] Although dispatched from France shortly after the murder of Henri III, Luxembourg did not actually arrive in Rome until late January 1590. On 16 December he was still in Venice. See Fugger Newsletters, 142.

[27] Pastor, History of the Popes, XXI, 324.

[28] The instructions are discussed ibid., 328-332.

[29] L'Épinois, La Ligue et les Papes, 352-353.

[30] Caetano to Sixtus V, 26 January 1590, ibid., 378.

[31] *Ibid.*, 400.

[32] *Ibid.*, 379.

[33] Caetano to Sixtus V, 27 January 1590, quoted *ibid.*, 392-393.

[34] Villeroy, *Mémoires d'Éstat*, 151.

[35] Mayenne to Moreo, 7 March 1590, cited in Gustave Baguenault de Puchesse, "La Politiqué de Philippe II dans les affaires de France, 1559-1598," *Revue des Questions Historiques*, XXV (1879), 47. This letter is also quoted in Bouillé, *Histoire des ducs de Guise*, III, 443.

[36] For a narrative of the battle of Ivry see Oman, *Art of War in the Sixteenth Century*, 500-505.

[37] Mayenne to Sixtus V, 28 March 1590, quoted in L'Épinois, *La Ligue et les Papes*, 421.

[38] *Ibid.*, 423.

[39] *Ibid.*, 437.

[40] Rott, *Représentation . . . auprès des cantons Suisses*, II, 436.

[41] *Ibid.*, 552-554 and 438-443.

[42] Mayenne to Philip II, 22 March 1590, Croze, *Les Guises*, II, 401-406.

[43] Philip II to Parma, 3 September 1589, quoted in L'Épinois, *La Ligue et les Papes*, 342. This letter is also cited in Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road* (Cambridge, 1972), 245.

[44] Mayenne to Parma, 12 April 1590, Croze, *Les Guises*, II, 407-408.

[45] For the meeting at Condé see Léon van der Essen, *Alexandre Farnèse, Prince de Parme* (Brussels, 1937), V, 283-284. Also Bouillé, *Histoire des ducs de Guise*, III, 470-471.

[46] "Discours véritable de tout ce qui s'est passé en la ville de Paris . . . jusqu'au 12 Juin 1590," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, IV, 272-276.

[47] Mayenne to Moreo, 29 June 1590, Croze, *Les Guises*, II, 408-409.

[48] Palma Cayet, 241-243.

[49] Philip's order to Parma and the latter's reluctance to go to France are discussed in Parker, *The Army of Flanders*, 245-246.

[50] *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, ed., H.F. Brown (London, 1894), VIII: report of Contarini of 4 July 1590, 494.

[51] Bouillé, Histoire des ducs de Guise, III, 482-484.

[52] Parma to Philip II, in Essen, Alexandre Farnèse, V, 304.

[53] For example, see Mayenne to Diou, 19 November 1590, Correspondance, I, 45.

[54] The conclave and the election of Gregory XIV are discussed in Pastor, History of the Popes, XXI, 351-355.

[55] The instructions to Diou, dated 27 December 1590, are in Correspondance, I, 225-231.

[56] A detailed account of Turenne's negotiations is supplied in Howell A. Lloyd, The Rouen Campaign, 1590-1592: Politics, Warfare and the Early-Modern State (Oxford, 1973). In spite of the attempts at secrecy, Turenne's mission and its aims were common knowledge in the Catholic sphere. See, for example, Parma's fears, expressed in a letter to Philip in late 1590, Essen, Alexandre Farnèse, V, 305.

[57] The monitor is quoted extensively in both L'Épinois, La Ligue et les Papes, 476ff; and Pastor, History of the Popes, XXII, 367-373.

[58] Ibid., 369. The announcement of Gregory's support is also mentioned in Palma Cayet, 278-279.

[59] Bouillé, Histoire des ducs de Guise, IV, 42 and Palma Cayet, 277.

[60] Mayenne to Diou, 11 May 1591, Correspondance, II, 206.

[61] From a report of a conversation of Mayenne with the bishop of Plaisance in March 1591, quoted in L'Épinois, La Ligue et les Papes, 462.

[62] He wrote most frequently to the cardinals Sfondrato, Cremona, Caetano, Pellève and Saint-Severin, in Correspondance, II, passim.

[63] Mayenne to Diou, 7 March 1591, ibid., 82-88.

[64] For example, he called the Conference of Vincennes "like a meeting of old friends," whereas in reality Mayenne had been forced to make great concessions to the Seize. Mayenne to Sfondrato, 30 March 1591, ibid., 128-129.

[65] L'Estoile, 102.

[66] Mayenne to Diou, 29 January 1591, Correspondance, I, 319-322.

[67] Mayenne to Archbishop of Lyon, 28 January 1591, ibid., 307-311.

[68] Mayenne to Diou, 7 March 1591, ibid., II, 82-88.

[69] Parma to the city of Paris, 19 November 1590, ibid., I, 45-46.

[70] Mayenne to Parma, 6 December 1590, ibid., 104-105.

[71] Mayenne to Diou, 17 February 1590, ibid., II, 60.

[72] Mayenne to Archbishop of Lyon, 15 March 1591, ibid., 104-105.

[73] Mayenne to comte de St.-Pol, 28 April 1591, ibid., 179-181.

[74] For example, see Mayenne to Parma, 11 May 1591, ibid., 213-217.

[75] Philip II to Parma, 22 March 1591, quoted in Essen, Alexandre Farnèse, V, 326.

[76] The meeting at Reims is discussed in L'Estoile, 109.

[77] See, for example, Correspondance, I, 129-138 and II, 306-314.

[78] Mayenne to Sultan, 3 February 1591, ibid., II, 5. Two more of Mayenne's letters to the Sultan are in Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, VIII, 540-542. Mayenne's overtures to the Sultan were apparently not warmly received, as described in Lippomano's report from Constantinople on 19 April 1591, ibid., 538-540.

[79] L'Estoile, 123 and Villeroy, Mémoires d'Estat, 175, discuss the return of Jeannin. The question of the Salic Law and the Infanta's candidacy will be discussed below in Chapter Four.

[80] Villeroy, Mémoires d'Estat, 176. L'Estoile, 123, also commented on the poor condition of the army.

[81] Historical Manuscripts Commission, Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury (London, 1891), IV: E. Grimston to Earl of Essex, 9 October 1591, 146.

[82] Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, VIII: report of Contarini, Venetian ambassador to Spain, 19 October 1591, 559. Contarini also mentions Philip's orders to Parma to proceed immediately and Parma's slow preparations.

[83] Parma made reference to Jeannin's mission in a letter to Philip II, 18 January 1592, Mémoires de la Ligue, V, 63.

[84] Essen, Alexandre Farnèse, V, 337. The demand for places of surety is also mentioned in Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, IX: report of Giovanni Dolfin, Venetian ambassador to Prague, 21 January 1592, 5.

[85] Parma to Philip II, 11 March 1592, Essen, Alexandre Farnèse, V, 342. Another mention of the rumour of Mayenne's negotiations is in Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, IX: report of Mocenigo, Venetian ambassador to Henri de Navarre, 26 February 1592, 13.

[86] These negotiations are fully described in Villeroy, *Mémoires d'Éstat*.

[87] *Ibid.*, 169.

[88] *Ibid.*, 181.

[89] Mayenne to Mendoza, 3 April 1590, Croze, *Les Guises*, II, 406-407. 6

[90] Pastor, *History of the Popes*, XXIII, 61-63.

[91] René de Lucinge, *Dialogue de François et du Savoysien, 1593*, ed., Alain Dufour (Geneva, 1963), 194.

[92] *Mémoires de la Ligue*, IV, 314-315.

[93] The affair of the letter to Spain is described in L'Estoile, 124-125 and Palma Cayet, 323.

[94] *Ibid.*, 335-336.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAYENNE AND THE SEARCH FOR A KING: THE ESTATES-GENERAL OF 1593

"To save the religion and the state, which are on the verge of collapse, the election of a Catholic king is imperative" wrote a pamphleteer on the eve of the Estates-General of 1593.[1] In similar fashion, the *cahiers* carried by the deputies to this assembly, some prepared for earlier meetings which had been cancelled, all emphasized the need "to proceed to the election of a king".[2] All staunch Catholics clamoured for a sovereign and, guided by Mayenne, the League moved inexorably toward its goal: the election of a monarch who would lead French Catholics in the extirpation of the heretics. Mayenne's responsibility was to provide direction for the movement until the military and political atmospheres were propitious for the convocation of the estates.

Meanwhile, theoreticians of the League strove to justify the anticipated election, unprecedented in French constitutional history. Their fundamental argument maintained that Henri de Navarre's heresy and apostasy, also unique in French tradition for an heir to the crown, disqualified him from the throne of the Most Christian King, despite his hereditary claim. The Declaration of Péronne of 1585, the original manifesto of the League, stated

> . . . subjects do not have to recognize or submit to a prince who is not of the Catholic faith, since the first oath made by our kings when the crown is put on their heads is to maintain

> the Holy Roman Catholic religion, after which oath they receive the oaths of fidelity from their subjects.[3]

The primacy of religious orthodoxy of the monarch was affirmed, claimed the League's propagandists, at the Estates-General of Blois in 1588, where Henri III had declared that the king's Catholicity, as sworn at his coronation oath, was a "fundamental and irrevocable law" of the kingdom of France.[4] Subsequent pamphlets drew heavily upon this important ruling, which remained in force until the French Revolution. "To be both king and Huguenot is like speaking German in France," remarked an anonymous tract, for the two are mutually exclusive.[5]

The exclusion of Navarre and the departure from the traditional line of succession necessitated an alternate procedure for selecting a monarch. The Estates-General, the only constitutional body in which such matters conceivably could be resolved, was the obvious choice. Adherents of the League worked assiduously to prove that the estates, representatives of the nation, could in fact reach a binding decision in the election of a king. The party's political theory emphasized the historic powers of the assembly and unearthed great quantities of evidence showing that the estates could be called by someone other than the king -- in this instance, Mayenne -- and actually had powers of legislation. Precedents ranging from the time of Clovis to the fifteenth century were produced to reinforce these assertions. In the peculiar situation of the League, which recognized no king after 1590, the theorists claimed election by the Estates-General was the only possible solution to the problem of the empty throne. With the support of such arguments the League directed itself toward the creation of a new monarch.[6]

In the first year of Mayenne's leadership the League actually had advanced a titular, unofficial king of France. Charles, cardinal de Bourbon, was recognized by a great number of Leaguers as Charles X. This was, however, a stopgap at best. Not only was the cardinal sixty-seven years old and childless, but also he was kept in close custody by his nephew, Navarre. Nonetheless, on 5 August 1589, three days after the death of Henri III made the threat of Navarre's succession a reality, Mayenne issued an edict urging all Catholics to unite in the cause, "awaiting the liberty and presence of the king our sovereign [Charles X]."[7] The declaration was posted throughout the kingdom to publicize the alternative to the heretic Navarre. Some response was elicited from the provincial _parlements_, but these declarations were insufficient to attract a great deal of support for a king who was, in effect, non-existent.[8] Perhaps the greatest result of Mayenne's edict was the clarification of the nature of his own position and the source of his authority. While Henri III lived Mayenne had been the lieutenant-general -- a position granted by royalty -- when the League actually recognized no king. The 'accession' of Charles X dispelled some of the ambiguity from his rank and enabled him to function and legislate as the representative of the king.

Charles X, however, was never officially acclaimed as king; and his incarceration was a permanent embarrassment to the League. Shortly after Mayenne's edict of 5 August the French leader wrote to Philip II, describing the recognition of the cardinal as a move to stimulate opposition to Navarre's pretensions to the throne. He also expressed his fear that Navarre would either murder his uncle or, more likely, keep him in prison indefinitely, thereby making a mockery of the League and its monarch.[9] So long as the cardinal de Bourbon remained in prison he could not be crowned. As well, given the dispute over the power of the Estates-General to elect a king and the numerous defects in the cardinal's claims, the League was not likely to proceed to his election *in absentia*. The Catholic movement appeared to have grounded on the obstacle of the cardinal's absence.

Frustrated by this serious impediment, Mayenne periodically was inspired to attempts to gain full recognition for Charles X. After the defeat at Arques in September 1589 destroyed his hopes of running rough-shod over Navarre, Mayenne pressed for a more binding pronouncement of the cardinal de Bourbon's accession. On 21 November, at Mayenne's instigation, the *Parlement* of Paris enjoined the kingdom "to recognize Charles, tenth of this name, our natural and legitimate king, and to give him the fidelity and obedience owed by good and loyal subjects."[10] Mayenne's powers as lieutenant-general were confirmed and he was allowed to organize a *Conseil d'État* to assist his government until the release of the king. The Estates-General were called by Charles X, actually Mayenne, to meet early in the next year to officially proclaim the cardinal de Bourbon's accession. Military affairs, however, forced several postponements of the assembly, and the defeat at Ivry, the death of Charles X and the siege of Paris made the meeting of the estates in 1590 improbable and impractical.

Meanwhile the name of Charles X was lavished with all the trappings due a monarch. Proclamations and *arrêts* from Mayenne were issued "*de par le roy*" and pretended to full royal authority. Coins were struck in the honour of the new king, and coats of arms were sold in the streets of Paris.[11] Poems and books were dedicated to him, and the provincial parlements and many of the League towns declared in his favour.[12] On 5 March 1590 the Parlement of Paris repeated its recognition of Charles X,[13] while Philip II, in a declaration placarded in Paris, vowed to fight "for the deliverance of the Most Christian King, Charles X, unjustly held in captivity by the heretics."[14] Shortly after Ivry the papal legate in Paris, Caetano, took oaths from the leading members of the Paris League, who promised "to stay under the command of Charles X and the duc de Mayenne until our last breath."[15]

But the reign of Charles X was an illusion. When he died on 9 May 1590, still in captivity, few mourned his passing. Palma Cayet, a contemporary historian, remarked that the League scarcely honoured the death of the man it had made king.[16] He had been raised to that position, primarily at the instigation of Mayenne, because the League needed a counterweight to the pretensions of Navarre, a figurehead to maintain unity and attract more members to the League. The policy of advancing the cardinal de Bourbon, started by Guise in 1585, was carried to its logical conclusion by Mayenne in 1589 and 1590. But the aged and childless Charles X never could have represented the definitive solution to the throne's vacancy. He was merely a cipher who served to lend more prestige to the League in the interim of finding a more suitable, permanent candidate. No personal powers or privileges were allowed him. When in 1589 the cardinal appealed to the Conseil Général for a pension to maintain him while in prison, the Conseil righteously declared that "a king should not have to beg for favours from his subjects," and refused the annuity.[17] No serious effort was made to free him from his captivity and have him crowned; Mayenne and the principal Leaguers seemed content with the idea, not the reality, of a king.

Despite the circumstances of his reign, Charles X did provide an important fiction for the League. His death made the problem of finding a successor acute. Two days before he died the Sorbonne, perhaps on hearing of the cardinal's grave illness, proclaimed officially what many Leaguers had said since the death of Henri III: "even if he [Henri de Navarre] should convert, Catholics are obliged by conscience to prevent him from succeeding to the government of the Christian Kingdom."[18] For the next three years Mayenne was entrusted, as lieutenant-general of "the late king Charles X, of blessed memory", to maintain this decision and to bring about the election of a successor.[19]

During this period the interests of Spain in the succession to the throne played a dominant role. Heavily endebted to Philip, Mayenne could not adopt an anti-Spanish policy for fear of compromising his position with his chief ally and destroying hopes for assistance in the future. Spain necessarily was an overriding factor in Mayenne's quest for a monarch. Philip had intimated his desire to have his daughter become queen even during the lifetime of the cardinal de Bourbon. He, as most others, obviously did not consider Charles X as the final resolution to the question of the French throne. After the death of the cardinal, Spanish demands became increasingly insistent. Philip "started to draw in the net of the pretensions of the Infanta and to present her case to the chiefs of the Union."[20] For the twenty-five year old Infanta Claire-Isabella-Eugénie to succeed, however, the Salic Law would have to be disavowed Its origins lost in the mist of ancient French tradition, the Salic Law stipulated that the crown of

France could only be worn by males, males whose claim to succeed to the throne did not stem through a female.[21] Philip and his agents asserted that the Salic Law was not inviolable and worked to prove its falsity. But simple negation of the Law was only the first step; the Infanta would have to be elected by the Estates-General. Therein lay the importance of Mayenne to the Spanish. Philip recognized the influence that the French leader would exercise over the estates, which could only be convened at the time and place of his bidding.[22] For this reason extensive negotiations occurred between Mayenne and the Spanish, particularly during 1592, over the proposed election of the Infanta.

Aside from the abrogation of the Salic Law, the discussions turned on the choice of a spouse for the Infanta. She could not, as a woman, hold the throne without a consort. Philip preferred a Hapsburg husband, perhaps the archduke Ernest of Austria, but he realized early in the negotiations that the French preferred a native king.[23] The major obstacle in the latter instance was the question of who would be chosen and how he would be selected. Whatever the outcome, the unsuccessful candidates were sure to be resentful of the victor, who would suddenly become their superior. In March 1591 one of Philip's letters to his ambassador was intercepted, a letter which instructed Philip's agent to favour the son of the duc de Lorraine in the contest for the throne. Mayenne "became aware of all this, and it caused him no small trouble."[24] The other princes of the League were undoubtedly disconcerted at this prospect as well.

The negotiations began in earnest early in 1592, while Parma was about to raise the siege of Rouen. Apparently Philip considered this an opportune moment, for the League was extremely weak and reliant upon his aid. The talks were more detailed and specific than the previous series of vague assurances exchanged between Mayenne and Spain. They clearly illuminate the intentions of both the Spanish and the French leader regarding the crown of France. Mayenne's agents, acting upon his lengthy instructions, made great demands upon Spain. They accepted the Infanta's candidacy "on the condition that she come to reside in France within six months" and with the proviso that she marry, again within one half year, "according to the advice of the councillors and ministers of the crown."[25] "In order to appease the kingdom," Mayenne's agents stipulated that 8,000,000 *écus* be paid to the "officers and ministers of the kingdom" upon her arrival and a further 10,000,000 *écus* be furnished over the following two years.[26] Any money that would be necessary "to confirm the allegiance of those in the Catholic party and attract the notable followers from the party of the Béarnnais [Navarre]" would have to be paid by Philip in addition to the other sums.[27]

Parma and the Spanish negotiators, with whom the talks were conducted, were disconcerted by these extravagent demands. Mayenne's rationale for these compensations, that "once such a declaration [the League's support of the Infanta] is made the door to any accomodation with Navarre will be permanently closed," was not convincing.[28] He made his distrust of Mayenne manifest in letters to Philip, but to the French leader and his agents Parma maintained a diplomatic, tractable facade. He protested that he had no powers from Philip to conclude such a significant pact and made a greatly reduced counter-proposal. Rather than pay such huge lump sums, Philip would furnish the French with money as it was needed. Of his sincerity the French could be assured, since there "can be no doubt that . . . [Philip] would not want to abandon his daughter unless he himself was reduced to the greatest extremity."[29] As well, Parma demanded that the Estates-General be called immediately to formally elect the Infanta.

Much to the consternation of Parma, Mayenne's agent, Jeannin, rejected these demands, particularly the second. He replied that the estates "are only an accessory, to legitimate what had already been decided, since they would be composed only of people who would act at the bidding of Mayenne."[30] Parma surmised from this attitude that "in deferring the assembly of the estates, Mayenne is simply trying to extend the power which he already possesses."[31] Soon after, the French negotiators suspended talks until Philip had accorded full powers of settlement to Parma and his agents. No agreement was reached, and Parma was obliged to lead his army to the relief of Rouen without first securing guarantees of the Infanta's accession from Mayenne.

The principle of the Infanta's rights had been accepted by Mayenne in these talks, but the negotiations had foundered on the assurances both sides sought in order to guarantee their respective positions. The Spanish wanted formal recognition of the Infanta in the Estates-General before making any firm commitments on the support which would be furnished to her by Spain and the manner of the selection of her husband. For his part, Mayenne demanded concrete details on the amount of support that the Infanta would receive and some assurance that he and the principal Leaguers -- the "officers and ministers of the kingdom" -- would be influential in the choice of a king, the management of the money received from Spain and, presumably, the governing of the kingdom. Both participants in the talks, Mayenne and

Parma, parted with distrust of the aims of the other. This was only aggravated by a final bid by Parma in April 1592 to extract pledges from Mayenne before returning to the Netherlands. He demanded that Mayenne and the princes of the League swear unconditional allegiance to the Infanta. The French leaders took offense at this attempt to force their hands before any guarantees from Spain were secured; and Mayenne, highly indignant, declared that if Spain treated him in this manner, then he would not mind if Navarre became a Catholic.[32]

The suspicions of the Spaniards were founded not only on Mayenne's evasiveness in his dealings with them and the rumours of his simultaneous negotiations with Navarre, but also on his continued postponement of the Estates-General. On 29 November 1590, when the League appeared to be recovering from the harsh turn of events in that year, Mayenne issued an order for the estates to convene at Orléans in the following January. They were

> to resolve and conclude everything which, by common consent, will be found and judged the most necessary for the re-establishment of our holy religion, the conservation of the kingdom and the extirpation of heresy, under the obedience of a Catholic king.[33]

Claiming that royalist troops threatened Orléans, Mayenne shifted the place of assembly to Reims for May 1591. The delegation from Paris constituted the bulk of the deputies who arrived at Reims in time for the meeting. Provincial representation was almost non-existent. Fearing that the more radical Parisian delegates would oppose his wishes, which were never stated, Mayenne prorogued the assembly until more representatives arrived. When numbers did not show a significant increase, he sent the remaining deputies home and took the opportunity to issue a unilateral reaffirmation of his position and the aims of the Catholic

League, disguised as a resolution passed by the assembled deputies.[34] Thereafter, despite his frequent promises Mayenne took no positive steps to reunite the three estates, claiming that the military emergency temporarily possessed a higher priority.

Throughout 1592 there were attempts at discussions between League and Spanish negotiators, but none were as detailed as the series undertaken in January. Philip would not grant any of Mayenne's earlier demands for money and aid until the estates elected the Infanta, but Mayenne's attitude to the election remained equivocal. As a result of this ambiguity, Philip began to show a great deal of favour towards the young duc de Guise, "so that the nephew might serve as a counterweight to the uncle."[35] Guise received a monthly pension from Spain[36] and was widely rumoured to be the contender preferred by Philip for the hand of his daughter.[37]

The *impasse*, however, could not last indefinately. Pressure upon Mayenne from within the League increased as more Leaguers called for the immediate convocation of the Estates-General. The withdrawal of Spanish support also served to hasten Mayenne's decision. Finally, in September 1592 Mayenne called the estates to meet at Soissons in the following month. The location of the meeting had been suggested, rather forcefully, by the duke of Parma, who wanted the estates held in northern France in close proximity to the influence of his army.[38] Mayenne soon reversed this decision, probably as a result of the conciliatory moves in Paris, and transferred the meeting to the capital for 20 December, to find "a good and holy resolution . . . that will assure the peace of the state."[39] On 2 December a potentially forceful suasive influence upon the impending estates was removed by the death of Parma in Brussels. Although postponed for a month to allow more deputies to arrive in Paris, the estates did at last begin sessions late in January 1593. The League was about to choose a king.

Several days after his call for the meeting of the estates Mayenne issued a Declaration addressed to the Catholics of France.[40] Composed in clear, lucid prose and maintaining a consistent tone of moderation, the Declaration delineated the arguments for the League's existence. Mayenne first pointed out the essential Catholicity of the French crown. This in itself provided ample justification to disregard the pretensions of Navarre, who sought to "persuade . . . [his followers] that the war is not for religion", but that the League was trying "to usurp or dissipate the state." On the contrary, Mayenne asserted, the Leaguers are blameless, for they only "follow the ordinance of the Church, the example of their forebearers and the fundamental law of the kingdom, which requires a prince who claims a hereditary right to the crown to be Catholic." Navarre was accused as the aggessor in the civil struggles by his continued insistence that "he did not want to be forced by his subjects" to convert. His promise to be instructed in the Catholic religion only after he was "obeyed and recognized by all his subjects" confused the issues at stake, since religion takes precedence over such comparatively minor considerations as royal susceptability to the pressures of subjects.

Navarre's uncompromising refusal to be constrained to convert had prolonged the war needlessly, charged Mayenne. If he would have released the cardinal de Bourbon from imprisonment,

> recognized him as his king and allowed nature to put an end to the cardinal's days -- using this time to be instructed and reconciled with the Church -- he would have found the

> united Catholics disposed to give him the same obedience and fidelity given to the king his uncle.

Since Navarre failed to follow the dictates of reason, the Catholics were forced to proceed to the election of a king. The Declaration concluded with an appeal to the Catholics in the camp of Henri de Navarre to come to the estates in Paris to confer with the League. Hopefully a reconciliation could be reached, so that "the remedy which we decide in our consciences to be the most useful for the conservation of the religion and the state" could be found.

Moderate in tone, conciliatory in its proposals and near brilliant as a vehicle to justify the actions of the League, Mayenne's Declaration of 5 December 1592 served to weaken royalist objections to the meeting of the Estates-General and assure the delegates of the legitimacy of the assembly and its purpose. By stressing the willingness of the League to recognize a Catholic Navarre in 1590 -- a point which is not reinforced by any evidence on the part of either Mayenne or the League -- Mayenne scored a propaganda victory for his party, making Navarre appear the unreasonable antagonist in the struggle. The supporters of Navarre could not allow such an attack on their position, nor could the royalist Catholics ignore the offer of serious negotiations, for such a move would only lend credence to Mayenne's account of Navarre's intransigence.

On 27 January 1593 the Catholic notables in the company of Navarre accepted Mayenne's offer to "enter in conference and communication on the best means to assauge the troubles of the kingdom and to conserve the Catholic religion."[41] Henri de Navarre for his part, issued a stinging attack upon Mayenne and the League on 29 January, three days after the assembly convened in Paris. He placed the blame for the wars entirely upon the League and the political ambitions of its leader. The "so-called estates" being held in Paris were declared illegal; anyone connected with the assembly was guilty of lèse-majesté.[42]

Notwithstanding Navarre's forceful condemnations the deputies in Paris continued to meet. The sessions of February dealt primarily with the position to be granted the papal legate, the verification of the powers of the deputies and the dispatch of letters urging the various provinces to send their representatives, for the estates had fewer than a quarter of the usual number of members.[43] Mayenne, however, played only a small part in these proceedings. He presided over the opening ceremonies and the sessions where all three estates sat together but otherwise had no active role. On 8 February he left Paris for Soissons, to meet with the agents of Philip II.

The new Spanish representative, the duke of Feria, had been sent by Philip to present the Infanta's claims to the Estates-General. Before proceeding to Paris, however, he had thought it expedient to gain the assurances of Mayenne, who "governed the assembly even when absent, and without whose support nothing could be achieved."[44] In their first conference Feria announced to Mayenne that Philip had conferred the late duke of Parma's title, Lieutenant of the King of Spain in Flanders, upon him.[45] Feria then stated the wishes of Spain regarding the estates: Mayenne would recognize the Infanta and exercise his authority to have her elected queen, in return for which he was promised pecuniary benefits and the continuation of his lieutenancy in the new reign. But Mayenne was fully aware of his value to the Spanish and, not mollified by the empty position conferred upon him, demanded a greater recompense for his support of the Infanta. An agreement was concluded after a week of heated and sometimes bitter negotiations. In return for the election of Isabella, Mayenne was to receive the government of the duchies of Burgundy and Normandy, discharge from all the debts he had contracted in the service of the League, a payment of 600,000 écus on the day of the Infanta's coronation, a yearly pension and the continuation of his position of lieutenant-general.[46] Ten days later Mayenne swore to Philip that he would use his influence to make "the princes, prelates, lords and deputies of the estates of this kingdom . . . declare and name the Infanta Isabella queen of France" and would honour his agreement "with my life and every means at my disposal."[47] Although the concessions had been rather high, Feria departed for Paris with some confidence of the support of Mayenne's authority for his presentation of the Infanta's rights.

Feria made his triumphal entry into Paris on 8 March. He soon found, however, that the estates were spending more time discussing the proposed conference with the royalist Catholics than in working toward the election of the Spanish candidate. Worst of all, it was obvious that Mayenne had given his approval to these actions. Rather than go to Paris to guide the estates in the Infanta's favour, as he had promised to Feria in February, Mayenne had returned to his army and laid siege to Noyon. From there he kept abreast of events in Paris. The agreement of the Catholics around Henri de Navarre to meet League representatives in a conference was received with a great deal of favour in the three estates. All agreed to submit the matter to "the advice of Monsieur le duc de Mayenne."[48] Mayenne approved immediately, and a reply in his name was drafted on 4 March.[49] With the proviso that no heretics be involved, the estates agreed to discuss possible means for the unity of the Catholics, "for we cannot reject any counsel which could aid, decrease or put to an end to our present misery."

By condoning such a conciliatory move Mayenne broke the spirit of his February agreement with Feria, for negotiations with the royalist Catholics would almost certainly entail discussions of Navarre's candidacy and conversion. The Venetian ambassador to Henri de Navarre attributed this volte-face to the small sum of money which Feria carried to Paris to pay Mayenne and the faithful Leaguers, "a sum far inferior to that which the Duke of Mayenne had asked for."[50] But the first overtures to negotiation had in fact been made by Mayenne himself in his Declaration of 5 December. The preparations for the conferences were under way while Mayenne was affirming the Infanta's rights in Soissons. Obviously his dealings with the Spanish representative had not been sincere.

Further evidence that Mayenne did not intend to fulfill his promise to work for the election of the Infanta was provided as the meeting of the estates extended into April. In spite of frequent letters from the assembly urging him to return to Paris, until which time they "deferred the most important and principal matters,"[51] Mayenne remained with his army, to "relieve the long oppression and misery of the city of Paris" caused by the royalist control of the arteries leading into the capital.[52] The estates were fully prepared to recognize his authority in directing their actions, but he did not return to Paris until 6 May, when negotiations with the royalists were already in progress.

On 2 April 1593 Feria gave his preliminary address to the estates.

He reminded them of the aid supplied by Spain to combat "the flame of heresy" and argued the benevolent, altruistic nature of Spanish interest in French affairs. This address, although rebutted by the cardinal Pellève, who reminded Feria of all the aid which France historically had furnished to Spain, appeared to be well received.[53] However, on the day following this Spanish overture -- on the same evening in the case of the nobility -- the three estates listened to and approved of the royalist acceptance of a conference. In the next three weeks arrangements for the meeting were finalized. Deputies were selected to represent each estate and, after numerous changes, Suresnes was agreed upon as the site most convenient for the delegates of both parties. Feria and the papal legate protested to Mayenne that "your presence in this place is very necessary" in order to control this unwelcome turn of events,[54] but the preparations for the conference continued and Mayenne did not return.

Indeed, Mayenne was fully cognizant of and supported the imminent negotiations. His remaining popularity with the radical Leaguers and the *prédicateurs*, who denounced all overtures to the royalists as a *Politique* conspiracy, was lost by this stance.[55] On 23 April he approved the twelve deputies chosen by the assembly -- four from each estate -- and granted them powers to proceed "to try to induce the Catholics of the opposite party to leave the heretic [Navarre]."[56] The deputies were given only deliberative powers; all proposals would have to be referred to the Estates-General. The first session of the conference convened at Suresnes on 29 April. To facilitate the discussions Mayenne declared a cessation of hostilities in the vicinity of Paris and Suresnes.[57]

By the time that Mayenne returned to Paris on 6 May the attentions of royalists and Leaguers alike were focussed upon the conference in progress at Suresnes rather than upon the estates in Paris. The conversion of Henri de Navarre almost immediately became the main object of concern in the discussions at Suresnes.[58] The leader of the League's delegation, the archbishop of Lyon, maintained that Navarre, as an apostate, could not possibly be recognized as king. Therefore, said the archbishop, the conference should deal solely with the question of uniting the Catholics. The royalist leader at the conference insisted that Navarre's religion should make no difference, particularly since he had repeatedly promised to respect and maintain the Catholic religion. In the midst of these arguments, on 17 May, Navarre announced his intention to receive instruction in the Catholic faith. The timing of this move was so advantageous for the Huguenot leader as to cast doubts upon the sincerity of his sudden revelation; but whatever the motives, Navarre's proposed conversion dramatically altered the complexion of the struggles in France. If the king of Navarre became a Catholic the issues would be confused: no longer could the League's resistance be justified as a simple Huguenot versus Catholic struggle. Mayenne's cautious reply to Navarre's announcement, apparently the 'official' League stance, was that "he desired with all his heart that the king of Navarre would become a true Catholic" but some consideration was necessary before making a response. The pope's acceptance or rejection of the conversion, he said, would have to be the final authority on such a matter.[59]

The definite trend toward reconciliation which was occuring at the conference of Suresnes, both before and after Navarre's intention to convert was announced, spurred Feria to hasten the presentation of the Infanta's rights. On 14 May he met with Mayenne, the papal legate and representatives from each of the estates to broach informally the subject of the Spanish princess' candidacy.[60] He offered an army and large sums of money "and desired only the recognition of the Infanta's right to the succession and her election by the estates." One of the deputies present remarked in response to this proposal that

> . . . the kingdom of France has been maintained for twelve hundred years under the domination of kings in conformation to the Salic Law and the customs of the kingdom. If the Salic Law and these customs are broken or if, by election, a woman is named [queen], she could marry a foreign prince who, in time, would alter the laws of the kingdom.

Mayenne remained silent throughout this objection and did not censure the deputy when the speech concluded. His only comment was that he needed time to consider.

Not dismayed by Mayenne's failure to express his own position, Feria submitted a formal, written proposal to the estates on 28 May.[61] After disclaiming the conference of Suresnes as a paradoxical move whose only result could be "to cut our [Catholics'] throats with our own knife," he advanced terms similar to those presented to Mayenne a fortnight before.

The estates made no move to accept Feria's offers and, once again, Mayenne did not indicate his own inclination. One question, however, was raised; a deputy querried "if the ministers [of Spain] have the power or intent to marry the Infanta to a Catholic French prince."[62] Since all the deputies wished an answer to this question, Feria replied on 13 June with a second proposition "which is not contradictory to your so-called fundamental laws."[63] He suggested that the archduke

Ernest, brother of the Holy Roman Emperor, be elected by the estates. At the same time the assembly could sanction his marriage to the Infanta, who would become Queen Consort. Ernest possessed all the necessary attributes, explained Feria. "He is a zealously religious prince, which he has proven by his actions in Austria . . . and from what I have heard he speaks, or at least understands, French." This proposal was rejected outright, at the instigation of Mayenne, because the archduke was not French. However, if Philip "had the intention of marrying the Infanta of Spain to a French prince, then [the estates] would listen."[64]

Feria was not desperate. Negotiations with the royalists were still in progress while the estates were entertaining his offers. Even the legate's opposition to talks with the Navarristes, which he considered pointless, had no restraining effect on the deputies involved.[65] The Spanish representative was seriously compromised by Mayenne's failure to intercede on his behalf. The repeated obstruction to Spanish interests presented or allowed by the leader made significant progress of the Infanta's candidacy extremely difficult. On 21 June Feria accepted the League's demand that the husband of the Infanta be one of the French princes, stipulating only that the spouse must be selected by Philip from among the princes of the House of Lorraine.[66] The estates communicated this offer to the royalists but did not hasten to respond to the duke of Feria.

Before the reply could be drafted the Leaguer Parlement of Paris issued its famous arrêt in defense of the fundamental laws of the kingdom. By its own authority, the Parlement declared on 28 June that "no treaty can transfer the crown to the hands of a foreign prince or princess." Particular stress was attached to the latter case, since the accession of a female would constitute a clear violation of the Salic Law.[67] Four days later the duc de Mayenne replied to Feria in a letter which was probably influenced largely by the Parlement's injunction.

> The estates will always hold the king of Spain in the greatest honour if he deigns to give his daughter the Infanta to a French prince, . . . however, the estates estimate that to have this election at a time when we are so weak would be too perilous. . .. They reserve further deliberations until an army is ready to sustain and execute their deliberations and resolutions.[68]

The Spanish agents tried desperately to appeal this decision. Feria asked Mayenne "to crush the arrêt given . . . by the court of Parlement." They complained that all the Spanish aid of the previous years "is being thrown into the water" and hinted broadly that "the princes of the blood of Lorraine" were being "deprived of the greatness to which their merits could have carried them."[69] Rumours in the capital spread the news that Philip had settled on the young duc de Guise for his daughter's husband.[70]

The pace of the Spanish negotiations increased as Feria sought to circumvent the unreceptive estates by direct conferences with Mayenne and the League princes.[71] On 10 July he attempted to secure Mayenne's agreement to the nomination of the duc de Guise, but the French leader declined, protesting that he first wished to see Feria's powers to conclude such an arrangement. These were produced at the next meeting of 13 July, but Mayenne demanded assurances that he would be reimbursed for having "spent all his wealth for the party of the Union." Feria agreed to compensate Mayenne, who then took a week to prepare a list of his wishes. Further sessions were held, but Mayenne insisted on his own complete satisfaction before considering any proposals to nominate a king. Meanwhile, events in the camp of the royalists made these discussions virtually pointless; on 25 July, in the cathedral at St.-Denis, Henri de Navarre abjured his heresy and took the sacraments of the Catholic Church.

Navarre's conversion was hardly a surprise to the Leaguers. Its effect, however, was to terminate the meeting of the Estates-General. The foundation of the League's opposition to Navarre was undermined. Three days before the ceremony at St.-Denis Mayenne announced to the assembly that

> this is not the time to proceed -- although it has pleased the king of Spain to give his daughter to monsieur de Guise, who would then be elected king of France by the estates -- because we have few forces and our enemies have asked for a truce, which we cannot reasonably refuse.[72]

Already some of the deputies had returned to their homes without leave from the assembly, while others suggested that the meeting be prorogued until the pope had passed his decision on the acceptability of the conversion of Navarre. On 8 August the last official act of the estates was passed; the decrees of the Council of Trent were received into France.[73] Before departing the deputies took an oath to reconvene in October, "to proceed to the resolution and conclusion of the principal points and affairs" of the kingdom.[74] Mayenne had already concluded a three months' truce with Navarre to allow the people of France to escape the miseries of war, if only for a brief period.[75]

The estates did not reconvene. The League lost its impetus after the conversion of Navarre, and when the truce of 31 July expired at the end of 1593 few Leaguers joined Mayenne in the resumption of the struggle. In the early morning of 22 March 1594 the governor of Paris allowed royalist soldiers to enter the capital in advance of Henri de Navarre. Later in the day, when the converted leader made his unopposed entry into Paris the effectual resistance of the League was symbolically terminated at the center of its greatest strength. Thereafter Mayenne, with little support, spent most of his time trying to rekindle the revolt by begging aid from Spain. He held out until late in 1595, the last of the major Leaguers -- with the exception of Mercoeur in Brittany -- to be reconciled to the new regime.

From the evidence of the four years of his leadership it becomes obvious that Mayenne did not want to find a solution which would obtain a king for Catholic France. The cardinal de Bourbon, although claimed by the League as its legitimate monarch, was never a realistic, permanent solution to the problem. Despite his protestations, Mayenne did not make any determined efforts to affirm the cardinal's position. After the death of the cardinal no decisive step was taken to ensure a successor. The estates were frequently postponed, and the war against Navarre, given as the excuse for these postponements, went badly. Mayenne's negotiations with the Spanish in 1592 show an equal reluctance of the French leader to bind himself to any firm engagement. He attached an almost impossible price, with payment in advance, for his adherence to the Infanta's candidacy.

When finally pressed by internal moves for conciliation and external withdrawal of support to call the Estates-General, Mayenne did not demonstrate any greater sympathy for the election of a king than he had in the previous four years. Indeed, his actions with regard to the estates seem to justify the explanation offered by Palma Cayet, who commented that Mayenne "found himself between two powerful kings and could not embrace the party of either one without earning the enmity of the other. He wanted only to remain neutral and resolved, therefore, ". . . to practise dilayements."[76] A policy of dilayements typifies Mayenne's policies and attitudes before, during and after the estates. His Declaration of 5 December, with its offer to negotiate with the royalist Catholics, was largely a reaction to the Spanish influence which Mayenne anticipated in the assembly. At the same time, however, he did not proceed too far in this direction; his agreement with Feria in February was in complete contradiction of the negotiations simultaneously in progress with the royalists. Yet after this bargain Mayenne did not act in faith with either of the parties solliciting his support. Rather than return to the estates and attempt to influence their deliberations either for or against the Infanta, he embarked on a two month campaign, removing himself from the center of affairs in Paris. After his return in May, Mayenne allowed negotiations with Navarre's adherents to continue while the Spanish presented their proposals to the estates. Despite Feria's willingness to compromise, Mayenne did not seriously entertain his offers. This could be construed as an indication of tacit support for Navarre, but once Navarre had converted, Mayenne showed no immediate inclination toward leaving the League and pledging his support to the new king.

Mayenne did not try, either at the Estates-General of 1593 or at any other time, to get a king elected. He did not want to see a monarch established on the vacant throne, and certainly did not desire the success of the Spanish Infanta. His failure to provide the initiative in the election by making his own position clear destroyed any hope of a workable solution resulting from the meeting of the estates. Throughout his period of leadership he practised delaying tactics and, when the final resolution was forced upon him in 1593, he still refused to accept any role in either electing a king or recognizing the converted Henri de Navarre. In providing initiative in the creation of a monarch, his principal responsibility as leader, Mayenne failed the movement which, although not totally under his control, would have been influenced greatly by his example and orders.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[1] Advertissement a Messieurs les Deputez des Estats, assemblez en la ville de Paris, au mois de janvier, 1593, anon. (Paris, 1593). A copy of this pamphlet exists in the Newberry Library.

[2] The cahiers from Rouen, Reims, Troyes, Auxerre, Toulouse, Amiens and Paris are in Bernard, Procès-Verbaux, 776ff.

[3] "Declaration des causes qui ont mû monseigneur le cardinal de Bourbon et les pairs, princes, . . . de s'opposer à ceux qui par tous moyens s'efforcent de subvertir la religion Catholique et l'Etat," Mémoires de la Ligue, I, 57.

[4] "Declaration qui confirme l'edit d'Union," Isambert, Recueil Général, XIV, 629-630.

[5] Advertissement a Messieurs les Deputez . . ., 8.

[6] This discussion is based largely upon Baumgartner, "Political Thought of the Radicals," chapters VIII and IX. See also the relevant sections in Lemaire, Les Lois Fondamentales; Church, Constitutional Thought; and Weill, Les Théories sur le pouvoir royal en France.

[7] "Edit et déclaration de monsieur le duc de Mayenne," Mémoires de la Ligue, IV, 30.

[8] See, for example, arrêts of parlements of Bordeaux and Toulouse, 19 and 22 August 1589, ibid., 45-48.

[9] Mayenne to Philip II, 21 August 1589, ibid., V, 268.

[10] "Arrest de la cour de Parlement de recognoistre pour roy Charles, dixiesme de ce nom," quoted in Saulnier, Cardinal de Bourbon, 238-239.

[11] L'Estoile, 31.

[12] Saulnier, Cardinal de Bourbon, 240.

[13] "Arrest de la cour de Parlement par lequel est enjoinct de recognoistre le Roy Charles X pour vray et legitime roy de France, et deffendre aucun traicté de paix avec Henry de Bourbon," Archives Curieuses, XIII, 225-226.

[14] Palma Cayet, 210.

[15] L'Estoile, 39.

[16] Palma Cayet, 234.

[17] de Thou, Histoire Universelle, VII, 565.

[18] "Résolution de la faculté de Théologie de Paris," 7 May 1590, Mémoires de la Ligue, IV, 270.

[19] "Edit de monseigneur le duc de Mayenne," Correspondance, I, 56.

[20] Palma Cayet, 239.

[21] The origin and development of the Salic Law is discussed in John Potter, "The Development and Significance of the Salic Law of the French," English Historical Review, LII (1937), 235-253.

[22] This is explicitly stated in Diego d'Ibarra to Philip II, 12 January 1592, Mémoires de la Ligue, V, 51.

[23] When Philip sent the duke of Feria to the negotiations early in 1592 he allowed that, as a last resort, Feria could agree to the Infanta's marriage to a French prince. See Essen, Alexandre Farnèse, V, 329-330.

[24] Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, VIII: report of Giovanni Mocenigo, 17 March 1591, 534.

[25] Parma to Philip II, 18 January 1592, Mémoires de la Ligue, V, 63. The talks are also reported in detail in Palma Cayet, 351-355.

[26] Parma to Philip II, 18 January 1592, Mémoires de la Ligue, V, 64.

[27] Ibarra to Philip II, 12 January 1592, ibid., 50.

[28] Parma to Philip II, 18 January 1592, ibid., 64.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibarra to Philip II, 12 January 1592, ibid., 51.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, IX: Mocenigo's report, 4 April 1592, 21-22.

[33] Correspondance, I, 56.

[34] This is ibid., II, 276.

[35] Palma Cayet, 355.

[36] *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, IX: report of Contarini, Venetian ambassador in Spain, 18 July 1592, 42.

[37] Report of Mareschini, Venetian ambassador in Rome, 16 May 1592, *ibid*., 32.

[38] Bernard, *Procès-Verbaux*, xlviii.

[39] Mayenne to *prévôt des marchands*, 27 November 1592, *ibid*., 557n.

[40] "Declaration faite par monseigneur le duc de Mayenne, lieutenant-général de l'etat et couronne de France, pour la réunion de tous les catholiques de ce Roiaume," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, V, 266-277. Copies are also to be found in Palma Cayet, 416-421; Bernard, *Procès-Verbaux*, 30-40; and Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, V, 494-497.

[41] "Proposition des princes, prélats, officiers de la couronne et principaux seigneurs catholiques, tant au Conseil du Roy, qu'autres étant près Sa Majeste," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, V, 288-291. Also in Palma Cayet, 423-424; Bernard, *Procès-Verbaux*, 40-42; and Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, V, 497.

[42] "Declaration de Roy sur les impostures et fausses inductions contenues en un écrit publié sous le nom du duc de Mayenne," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, V, 278-287. Also in Palma Cayet, 425-429; and Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, 497-500.

[43] Bernard, *Procès-Verbaux*, 3-14, lists 128 deputies, compared to a total of more than 500 in the Estates-General at Blois in 1588.

[44] Quoted in Bouillé, *Histoire des ducs de Guise*, IV, 147.

[45] *Ibid*., 143. This had been rumoured in *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, IX: Mocenigo's report of 1 January 1593, 53.

[46] "Copie de la promesse que le duc de Feria a faite au duc de Mayenne relativement aux intérêts particuliers de celui ci et promesse du duc de Mayenne," 16 February 1593, Croze, *Les Guises*, II, 410-411. This agreement is also mentioned by L'Estoile, 226.

[47] Mayenne to Philip II, 25 February 1593, Croze, *Les Guises*, II, 412.

[48] The sessions of each estate of 25-26 February, in which they agreed to the conference, are in Bernard, *Procès-Verbaux*, 57-65 for the third estate, 383-391 for the second and 570-572 for the first.

[49] "Reponse du duc de Mayenne . . . à la proposition de Messieurs les princes, prélats, officiers de la couronne . . . étant du parti du roi de Navarre," *Mémoires de la Ligue*, V, 291-295. Also in Bernard, *Procès-Verbaux*, 73-79; Palma Cayet, 432-434; and Dumont, *Corps Diplomatique*, 500-501.

[50] Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, IX: Mocenigo's report of 18 March 1593, 62.

[51] Estates to Mayenne, 17 March 1593, Bernard, Procès-Verbaux, 91.

[52] Mayenne to estates, 18 March 1593, ibid., 101.

[53] This address and the response are ibid., 124-142; Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, IX, 87-95; and Palma Cayet, 435-440.

[54] L'Estoile, 236.

[55] Ibid., 241, 245. See also Palma Cayet, 440-443.

[56] Bernard, Procès-Verbaux, 594.

[57] Ibid., 449-450.

[58] The sessions of the conference are reported in detail in Palma Cayet, 447-466.

[59] Bernard, Procès-Verbaux, 477.

[60] This meeting is described ibid., 184-185.

[61] Ibid., 211-214.

[62] Ibid., 245.

[63] Ibid., 252.

[64] Ibid., 285. The text of Mayenne's refusal is 281-282.

[65] Legate to cardinal de Pellève, 13 June 1593, ibid., 260-264.

[66] Ibid., 286-288.

[67] Mémoires de la Ligue, V, 377-378. The text of the arrêt is also in Palma Cayet, 490; and Bernard, Procès-Verbaux, 546-548.

[68] Ibid., 301-302.

[69] Ibid., 305-306.

[70] Ibid., 306-308.

[71] Palma Cayet, 492-493. Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, IX: Mocenigo's report of 23 July, 81, makes mention of these meetings. See also "Relation de Odet Soret", Bernard, Procès-Verbaux, 665.

[72] Ibid., 666.

[73] See Mémoires de la Ligue, V, 409-411, and Bernard, Procès-Verbaux, 344-346.

[74] The oath is *ibid.*, 342, and *Mémoires de la Ligue*, V, 411-412.

[75] Bernard, *Procès-Verbaux*, 327-331.

[76] Palma Cayet, 416.

CONCLUSION

After the death of Guise, Mayenne's first concern was to maintain the League as a viable alternative to Henri de Navarre. Guise's murder, and the subsequent assassination of Henri III, had radically transformed the character of the League from one of an extra-legal body exerting pressure upon the monarch to a national revolt against the established order of succession. But the League was not prepared to assume this role. There was no centralized organization -- aside from the temporary, partisan Conseil Général de l'Union -- to direct the political movements of the League. Equally, the League was unsuccessful in its attempts to reap the benefits from the royal fiscal structure, most of which it had captured. Therefore the League was unable to mobilize effective opposition to the royalists.

Added to the failure to create an adequate administration, the League was faced with the problem of factional dispute. Indeed, this stemmed partly from the disunified nature of the organization for, with the few contacts among Leaguers, each group tended to follow a separate path in the pursuit of different goals. Every sector of opinion possessed a different set of priorities: for the Seize, the immediate need was the elimination of undesirable elements from the League, combined with increased aid from Spain; for the moderates, the conversion of Navarre and the peaceful settlement of the wars held the greatest appeal. The League could either deliver itself to Spanish control, elect a French king or surrender to Navarre. These were essentially the only alternatives: the duc de Mayenne did little to direct the League in the direction of any of them.

If Mayenne did not succeed in leading the League to a successful conclusion it was largely because he did not want to reach one. All the evidence of Mayenne's period of leadership points to the fact that his primary interest was in maintaining his own power and position. Nothing indicates any great personal religious inspiration or concern for the Catholic religion in France as an explanation for his direction of the party. He was simply determined to remain at the status conferred upon him by his leadership. Many of his contemporaries recognized this deliberate policy of vacillation. In February 1592 the Venetian ambassador to Rome wrote that "the duke of Mayenne is not at all anxious that the estates should meet for the election of a King, as he desires to continue that authority which he now enjoys as Lieutenant General of the Crown of France."[1] During the sessions of the estates a pamphlet, in the popular dialogue form, stated the aims of Mayenne most succinctly.

> Do you think that M. de Mayenne has put his life in danger so many times, has been the lieutenant of the state for so long and has so often put himself in danger in order to allow the whims of a poorly-authorized assembly to grant this royal title and sceptor to either a Frenchman or a foreigner? You must admit that if he has any support among the deputies -- which he does -- he will use it for himself . . .. He will choose to remain what he is, by embroiling everyone so completely in this gathering that he will, at the end, be confirmed in his lieutenancy by its voice.[2]

But this task of preserving his position was never an easy one. The League after 1588 no longer professed to work with -- or through -- the king, but was dedicated to the explicit purpose of destroying him. Difficulties not in existence under the 'reign' of the duc de Guise arose to confront Mayenne. Internal dissension and division worked to fragment the already precarious relations between the various factions within the League. Spain exerted pressures upon the movement which, though ostensibly for the sake of the Catholic religion, served to further disrupt the League with differences over whether Spain should be allowed any participation in French affairs, particularly in the selection of a monarch.

Mayenne's response to these challenges was always temporization. Rather than take a firm stance on issues and events, he allowed them to follow their course, only slightly modified by his efforts. In this manner he allowed the Seize to remain strong in Paris, despite his obvious objections to their means and ends, in order to offset the moderates in the capital. Similarly, this 'policy' of contrived balance is evident in his dealings with Spain and the pope and, in 1593, in his simultaneous negotiations with Spain and the royalists. In the former case, with foreign aid so necessary to the survival of the League, he tried to attain it without paying any price. He supplemented assistance from Spain with the safer, but less generous, aid from the pope, all the while maintaining contact with Navarre, apparently hoping to demonstrate to Philip that he had other alternatives to complete submission to Spanish domination. In the Estates-General of 1593 Mayenne was equally equivocal in his diplomacy; he made promises, which he had no intention of keeping, to both sides in an attempt to ensure that neither would dominate the assembly.

The fundamental problem in the system of balance which Mayenne practised was the absence of any support in the center upon which he could sustain himself. Indeed, it was not so much a policy as a series of reactions to different events. It was extremely dangerous to his own position for Mayenne to make any decisive move. For example, in December 1591, when he dealt his crippling blow to the *Seize* after allowing them to flourish, checked only occasionally and temporarily, the opposing moderates soon proved themselves equally obnoxious to the leader. It was they who forced the convening of the estates. No party of *Mayennistes* had arisen from the defeat of the *Seize* simply because Mayenne had never tried to cultivate such a party: he had been preoccupied with balancing the moderates with the *Seize*, by which he earned the enmity of both factions. Similar developments occured in Mayenne's government of Burgundy. His long absence from this province and the intense disputes between royalists and Leaguers, as well as among the Leaguers, caused much disruption. Mayenne, however, did not take any positive steps toward repairing the breach within the Burgundian League and earning personal support.[3]

The use of such makeshift means to remain in control was even less advisable when applied to his dealings with Spain and Navarre. Employing Spanish money and troops against Navarre was a useful expedient, but since Mayenne never intended to sanction any extensive Spanish influence in the French government -- which included the election of a Spanish queen -- he ought to have realized that inevitably he would be called to account for the extensive assistance. This came in the estates of 1593, but Mayenne continued to play his dangerous game between the two superior forces of Philip II and the Henri de Navarre. He could not keep both these powers at bay. By the conversion of Navarre, his entire position was destroyed. Mayenne continued his struggle for two years after the conclusion of the estates, but the

League gradually disintegrated as its members made their peace with Navarre. Professing to await the pope's absolution of the former heretic, Mayenne soon lost all bargaining power after Henri IV -- for he may be so termed after 1593 -- entered Paris in March 1594. Mayenne became a mere pawn in the hands of the Spanish; he could no longer balance Spain with Navarre because the movement he still claimed to lead had lost much of its relevance and most of its strength.

Further proof of Mayenne's intention to keep himself in power is furnished by his continual delays. Mayenne was in the paradoxical position of not being able to fulfill his appointed task -- the destruction of Navarre and the election of a monarch -- without making his own post unnecessary. The meeting of the Estates-General was repeatedly postponed, and after 1590 Mayenne deleted the phrase "attendant les états" from his title when official proclamations were issued. As pressure for the assembly increased, Mayenne's measures to ensure support from Spain also escalated. He wanted money and troops, both of which would allow him to continue resistance against Navarre. Always present in Mayenne's negotiations with Spain was the article ensuring the continuation of his lieutenancy after the succession to the throne was settled as well as demands for personal monetary compensation. In July 1593 Mayenne had been the initiator of the truce with Henri de Navarre and at the end of that year, when the truce was due to expire, Mayenne had attempted to negotiate an extension. None of these actions are those of a leader pursuing a consistent, positive goal for his party. Rather, Mayenne's policies, actions and inaction suggest a man who did not want either to disturb the status quo or have it shaken by any others. He appears to have been perfectly content with the lack of any significant progress of the League, for this ensured his continuing ascendancy. Meanwhile, he made overtures to all interested in the progress of the League, seeking advantages both for himself and the movement which could be obtained with no obligation. He remained in opposition to Henri IV long after the need for the League was past. However, in reconciling himself to the new king he received generous compensation, which to Mayenne may have been reason enough to remain obdurate for so long.

The picture of the duc de Mayenne as it emerges from the period of his leadership is not one of a dynamic, forceful, personality. Rather, an impression is gained of a man prone to indecision and hesitant in asserting himself, who was cast in a role of leadership by chance rather than by any natural talent for the post. He achieved power suddenly and with only minimal effort, yet the story of his leadership is largely the gradual loss of this power. As the League progressed Mayenne's freedom of maneuvre became increasingly restricted. Although he did have an almost unlimited authority, his failure to exercise it in critical situations -- such as his reluctance to pursue the election of Charles X -- compromised his position in the minds of those who looked to him for initiative. At every stage he lost more of his authority and freedom to act by his reluctance to assert his primacy over the movement. The boundaries within which he could freely move had become so narrow by 1593 that he actually had little alternative to the convocation of the Estates-General and could do little to influence the assembly toward any one end without bringing about the total collapse of the League and his own position.

Mayenne was personally a part of the long tradition of revolts of the upper nobility against the crown, revolts such as the Armagnac-Burgundian struggles and the League of the Public Weal, both in the fifteenth century. Like his predecessors in these earlier revolts Mayenne sought greater privileges for himself and those of his class _vis-à-vis_ the power of the crown. He boasted no theoretical, constitutional, or even religious basis for his revolt. However, the League did not follow the pattern of these earlier rebellions. It was more popular, was not aimed solely at 'selfish' advantage and had a program which it intended to complete. It would not, as previous revolts, be bought by minor concessions from the monarch, who it no longer recognized. Moreover, the League formulated a comprehensive justification for its revolt, a justification which rested on religious and secular grounds. Since Mayenne had, in fact, little control over the League, his personal aspirations were overshadowed by the aims of the League, which he was forced to accept as his own. In this way circumstances obliged him to advocate the election of a monarch and the imposition of constitutional restraints upon the crown. The dichotomy between Mayenne's personal and public goals and beliefs is evident throughout his leadership.

In an age where strong personalities left their stamp upon the course of events Mayenne passes virtually unnoticed. Philip II, Elizabeth I, the duke of Parma, Henri IV and the duc de Guise all shaped events by the strength of their personalities and their abilities in pursuit of their goals. Mayenne, unlike these contemporary monarchs and political leaders, did not. Although his position gave him the control of half a nation -- more than his brother could ever have claimed -- the name of Mayenne is not passed down as that of a man who had any significant contribution to make to the events of his time.

Indecision was the dominant tone of Mayenne's leadership. His actions and general policies reflected the vague nature of his personal goals, which in turn influenced his direction of the League. When confronted with the necessity of action or decision, Mayenne compromised. The lack of any consistent guidance from above was also contributory to the increased division within the League. Since Mayenne did not adhere to or promote any particular course of action, each group within the movement believed itself justified in promoting its own definition of the goals and ends of the League, a task which properly belonged to the leader. Thus, the Seize established their own contact with Spain, since Mayenne was not fulfilling what they considered to be his duty; but at the same time the moderates, offended at Mayenne's suspiciously close ties with Spain, castigated him for delivering his country to the hated Spaniard and sought accomodation with Navarre.

From the point of view of the League, Mayenne was a total failure as a leader. At a time when strong, decisive guidance and capable military leadership were needed Mayenne vacillated and was repeatedly defeated in battle. His only real accomplishment was to prolong the resistance of the Catholics to Henri de Navarre for four years and, by the length of this resistance, drive a majority of former Leaguers to acceptance of Navarre within a year of his conversion. But the precedence of religion over politics was confirmed: Henri de Navarre was forced to convert in order to receive the crown. Civil war would surely have continued almost indefinitely had Navarre seized the throne and attempted to remain a Huguenot.

However, this was his only contribution to the League. In political and military matters Mayenne proved that he was not the leader necessary to fill the position thrust upon him by the death of his brother. Inevitably, a comparison is made between the actions and careers of Mayenne and the duc de Guise. Could Guise, put in Mayenne's position, have succeeded where the younger brother failed? The question, however, is not susceptible to a simple answer. The League after 1588 was largely shaped in reaction to the death of Guise and was subject to a greatly changed set of pressures acting upon it. Goals also had been transformed. Certainly the duc de Guise -- more capable, decisive and possessed of a more powerful personality -- would have been able to reconcile the internal disputes of the League to a greater extent than did Mayenne. He probably would have been more successful in the field and in negotiations, largely, in the latter case, because his early career indicates that he would have taken a much clearer stand and maintained it. But whether Guise could, in the long run, have led the League to a more successful conclusion is highly debatable. The problems facing the League were many; and as a result of its rebellious stance after 1588, many seriously questioned the legality of its revolt against the monarch and Navarre, who was the proper heir to Henri III, despite his religion. Internal divisions and external pressures, as well as increasing sympathy for the position represented by Navarre, raises the question whether anyone -- and the duc de Guise was probably the best qualified of the possible candidates -- could have succeeded where Mayenne failed.

Although Mayenne failed the League, he did achieve some degree of personal success. He was able, despite the massive problems confronting him, to remain in his position of power for over four years.

When he finally surrendered to Henri IV in 1595 the settlement he received paid all his debts and also awarded him a significant amount of cash as well as an annual pension. Thereafter Mayenne retired to his estates until his death in 1611, living the life of a 'country gentleman'. He was not involved in the politics of the new regime but was, as one of the foremost magnates of the realm, treated with consideration by Henri IV. His years of power and prominence ended, Mayenne was content to fade graciously into the background once the need for revolt passed.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

[1] Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, IX: Giovanni Moro's report of 22 February 1592, 12.

[2] Lucinge, Dialogue de François et du Savoysien, 1593, 237-238.

[3] For Burgundy, see Drouot, Mayenne et la Bourgogne.

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